Perceptions and experiences of fathering among Black men who share residence with their children

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my work own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: Signed by candidate Date:_____

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Abstract

The vast majority of fatherhood studies in South Africa have generally focused on absent, non-resident and unmarried fathers. Therefore, there has been a lack of studies that specifically investigate fathering perceptions and experiences, particularly among Black African men who are present in their children's lives and share residence with them. This study sought answers on how Black co-resident men perceive and experience fatherhood, through uncovering the fathers' understanding of their children's primary needs and factors that influence their parenting practices. Understanding their involvement included exploring their responsibilities, depth of their engagement, as well as the frequency of accessibility to their children.

This study used a qualitative design, and specifically the exploratory approach, through face-to-face semi-structured interviews to understand the ways in which men who share residence with their children make sense of fatherhood. The interviews were conducted with twelve (12) Black fathers, sharing residence with their partners and young children aged zero to seventeen (17) years in Cape Town. Probing questions were asked to identify the meaning and unique understanding of their parenting practices, as well as their perceptions about their children's primary needs. Lamb et al.'s (1985) fathering involvement theoretical framework was used to further identify how the participants characterise responsibility, engagement and accessibility in their involvement with their children.

The findings of this study suggested that resident fathers are generally involved in their children's lives right from conception. However, their level of involvement was different based on their cultural, socio-economic, and social experiences. Most fathers in this study still struggled to adjust their behaviour around child-care activities, such

as changing nappies. Furthermore, they still considered child-care activities as something that was the responsibility of the mother, and when they got involved, they regarded that as helping the mother. Finally, this study confirmed that co-resident fathers are involved, and willing to participate, but often chose the activities they preferred, such as playing with or entertaining their children rather than actual child-caring roles.

Keywords: co-resident fathers, fatherhood, fathering practices, Black African

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

1.1 Research problem and rationale for the study

Researchers have argued that where literature on fatherhood exists in South Africa, the work has generally been based on absent, non-resident and unmarried fathers (Mosikatsana, 1996; Posel & Devey, 2006; Townsend, N. W., Madhaan, S., & Garey, A. I., 2006; Perry, A. R., Harmon, D. K., & Leeper, J., 2012; Eddy, M.M., Thomson-de Boor, H., & Mphaka, k., 2013). There has been a lack of studies that specifically investigate fathering perceptions and experiences, particularly among Black African[1] co-resident men (Perry et al., 2012). Therefore, little is known about the fathering practices of men who live with their children, and the extent of their involvement with them. This lack of information leaves a gap in our understanding on how to better support fathers who share residence with their children.

The high rate of children growing up without fathers, particularly among Black Africans in South Africa, makes it important that we understand what shapes fathers' parenting practices. Statistics South Africa's mid-year population estimates (2018) reported that Black African men occupy the largest group among the overall population of men in South Africa. However, the number of fathers[2] sharing residence with their children is the lowest relative to other male population groups.

Statistics South Africa's mid-year population estimates (2018) further reported that out of the total population in South Africa, men from the various population groups – Black African, Coloured, Indian/Asian and White – occupied about 49% of the overall South African population. Of the total of 49% men, 81% were Black Africans, and the rest of the men's population comprised 19%. Only 36%, the lowest rate of

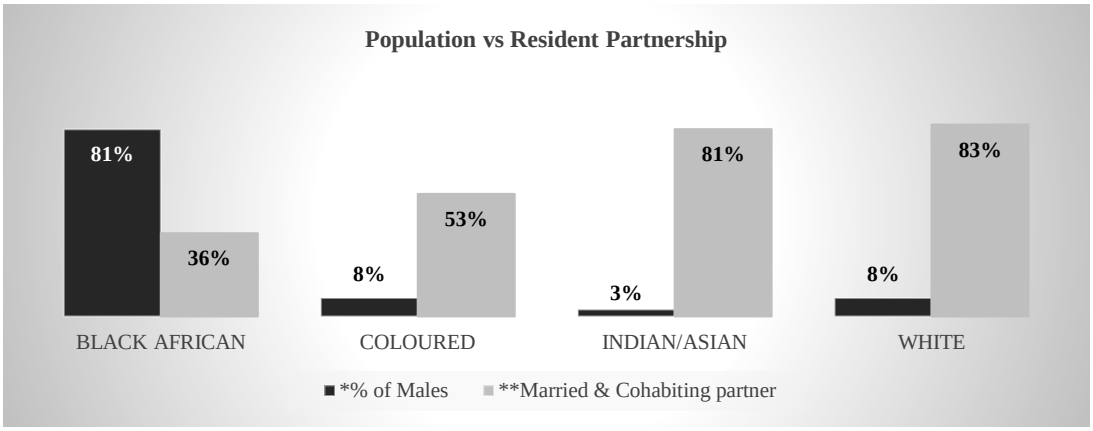
[1] Black African – A population group in Southern Africa, excluding Coloured, Indian and White population groups

[2] Estimates of fathers sharing a residence with children was based on the reported numbers of mothers sharing a home with their partners and children

fathers living with their partners (married or cohabiting) were reported to be among Black Africans, compared to other population groups – as elaborated in Figure 1 below. These figures suggest that the number of fathers[2] sharing a home with their children among Black Africans is low compared to that of other population groups in South Africa, which suggests that more children among Black Africans are growing up without fathers.

Figure 1 below illustrates various population groups versus the percentages of men who share a residence with their children in South Africa.

Figure 1: Population groups vs men (married or cohabiting) sharing residence with children in South Africa



*Mid-year population estimates for South Africa by population group and sex, 2018. For 2018, Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) estimated the mid-year population at 57,73 million. Out of 58 million, 28,2 million were men, of which 22,8 million were Black African men. However, about 29,5% of this population is under the age of 15 years and approximately 8,5% (4, 89 million) is 60 years or older.

**The South African Child Gauge 2018 report shows a child-centred analysis of maternal marriage rates recorded in 2017. *Source*: Statistics South Africa (2018) General Household Survey 2017. Pretoria: Stats SA.

Although fathers' absence is detrimental and associated with negative outcomes for children's development, research has also shown that fathers' physical presence alone in the house with children, without the extent of involvement, is not sufficient for children's positive development (Eddy et al., 2013). The extent of involvement can refer to regular and increased interactions between a father and his children, which

includes being responsible, engaged, and accessible to them (Lamb et al., 1985; Holmes et al., 2010; Eddy et al., 2013). Richter and Morrell (2006, p. 18) commented that *"a father might well be physically present, but emotionally absent"*, which suggests that fatherhood is not only about men's physical presence in the house, but requires more than just that in order to have an optimum output in children's development.

Researchers have indicated positive values among fathers who are involved in their children's lives, which suggests that fathers' active involvement is not only beneficial to children, but to the fathers themselves (Nelson, 2004; Cabrera et al., 2004; Harris & Ryan, 2004; Pleck & Masciadrelli, 2004; Jenkins, 2006; Holmes et al, 2010). These benefits include fathers who are less likely to commit suicide, to suffer depression, and the ability to find a stronger purpose in their own lives. Similarly, a fair amount of evidence has pointed out the positive benefits on children growing up with involved fathers, and disadvantages for those with absent fathers.

Scholars argue that a positive father-child interaction results in improved wellbeing of children, and improved cognitive development, social competence, academic achievement and occupational attainment as adults (Hernandez & Brandon, 2002). In contrast, there have been commonly reported cases where children growing up without fathers are at risk of harm, and experiencing disadvantages, such as lower levels of wellbeing (Horn & Sylvester, 2002; Eddy et al., 2013).

Due to dynamic family structures, South Africa is a country with many types of fatherhood (Customary Marriage Act and Civil Union that legalises polygamous marriage, and same sex unions). This particular study accounted for both biological and social fathers. Father figures referred to as social fathers, are those that participate and have positive impact in children's lives, but do not directly contribute to the conception of the offspring (Morrel and Richter, 2006; Dermott, 2008). Biological fathers are those

that are genetically involved in the insemination process of the child's make up (Dermott, 2008).

This study sought to better understand the views, perceptions, and experiences directly from co-resident fathers using a qualitative methodology. A co-resident father is described as a man who shares primary residence with his children and spends regular nights (four or more) with them (Townsend et al. 2006; Van den Berg & Makusha, 2018). Most South African studies that focus on co-resident fathers have applied a quantitative methodology (Smith, 2008; Desmond & Hosegood, 2011; Hosegood & Madhavan, 2012; Perry et al., 2012; Morrell et al., 2016). As a result of the predominant use of quantitative methods on co-resident fatherhood studies, little is known about their subjective parenting experiences. Therefore, this study seeks to provide the reality of human meanings and values, which could be difficult to quantify (Queiros et al., 2017).

Furthermore, other studies have also focused on the views of other family members, such as mothers and children. Basing the evidence about the practice of fatherhood on other people, and not on fathers themselves, could lead to a limited understanding. Fathers themselves are best positioned to speak about their own parenting practices, as they are the ones directly experiencing it. The limited platform that allows for fathers' voice could leave men's own information about their parenting role unexplored and undermined (Harris & Salt, 1999; Flouri, 2008; Bronte-Tinkew et al., 2008 & 2010).

1.2 Research question

It is the aim of this study to seek answers to the following research question:

- How do men who share residence with their children perceive and experience fatherhood?

The objectives of this study are therefore to:

- Uncover what men understand as their children's primary needs,
- Understand the factors that influence fathers' parenting practices, and
- Explore the level of involvement co-resident fathers engage in with their children through ascertaining the frequency of contact with their children – such as depth and quality of time spent with them, which is beneficial for children's development,
- Explore men's parenting practices and provide suggestions for how we can support men better.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

Recent literature has highlighted the idea of modern fatherhood, which inspires active paternal involvement in children's lives (Bronte-Tinkew et al., 2008). Therefore, this study is anchored in the fathering involvement framework of Lamb et al. (1985). This model has had a massive influence in the father involvement literature and refers to paternal involvement from three dimensions: accessibility, engagement, and responsibility (Lamb et al., 1985; Castillo et al., 2011; Eddy et al., 2013).

Accessibility represents the frequency of contact with the child, that is, the father's presence and availability. Engagement denotes shared activities, such as having meals together, visiting relatives together, and interaction with the child, e.g. care giving and playing. Lastly, responsibility, refers to decision-making, daily planning, father's participation in the child's overall needs, and financial support such as the provision of health-care, schooling, food, clothing, and intimate personal care (Smith, 2008; Hohmann-Marriot, 2011; Hosegood & Madhavan, 2012; Perry et al., 2012). These three characteristics of father involvement are necessary for children's wellbeing and development, and therefore it is important that fathering practices are viewed from

multi components.

Mavungu (2013) applied Lamb et al.'s (1985) involved fathering theory on the South African population, not limited to Black Africans, to understand the phenomenon of absent fathers among men in the age range of 15 to 35 years old and their reasons for disengagement. Mavungu (2013) further took into consideration the quality of the involvement among physically present and absent fathers – which is similar to what this study is aiming to achieve. Hosegood and Madhavan (2012) on the other hand, conducted a study among South Africans using data from various surveys. They also applied Lamb et al.'s (1985) involved fathering model in their study to understand fathers' roles within families, in order to come up with interventions for better family functioning, which are part of the objectives of this study. The use of Lamb et al.'s (1985) framework of involved fathering in this study aimed to identify how fathers perceive their parenting practices and further understand the frequency, depth, and quality of involvement in their children's lives.

This thesis is structured into four main chapters – the literature review, research methodology, research analysis and the conclusion. Chapter 2 reviews the existing literature on factors that largely affect resident fathers, as well as their perceptions and experiences of the parenting role – particularly among Black Africans. Chapter 3 discusses the methodology employed to identify and select participants and collect and analyse data in this research study. Chapters 4 and 5 present the findings of this study and interpret the data collected to form themes. Finally, Chapter 6, the conclusion that reiterates the level of involvement among Black fathers sharing residence with their children and the main factors that inform their parenting practices.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This study considers a co-resident father as a man who shares a home with his children. However, his presence can have little significance if it lacks depth, quality involvement, and attunement with his offspring. This chapter focuses on explaining, comparing, contextualising and making arguments using existing literature about the extent of involvement among co-resident fathers, the perceptions and understanding of their roles in their children's lives, particularly in Black South African communities.

This chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section considers the factors that influence fathering practices, exploring men's cultural norms, socio-economic status (education and employment levels and income), relational status, as well as residential status. The second section explores the differences between co-resident and non-resident fathers. It further discusses the implications of the residential status (co-resident and non-resident) on fathers' parenting practices, and the impact these effects have on children's development. The final section, which is the focus of this study, examines the perceptions and experiences of Black fathers sharing a residence with their children.

2.2 Factors affecting fatherhood

Scholars have shown how societal constructions of fatherhood can shape paternal parenting practices and how men's perceptions of their role and experiences shape the engagement they have with children (Henshaw, 1998; Rane & McBride, 2000; Pasley et al., 2002; Castillo et al., 2011; Paschal et al., 2011; Carlson et al., 2015; Nomaguchi & Johnson, 2016; Keshavarz & Mounts, 2017).

It is critical to acknowledge that father involvement is individually assumed and interpreted differently, and therefore various factors are likely to influence how each

man perceives and experiences their parenting roles. These factors include cultural practices, relational status, socio-economic status (i.e. education level and employment/income), residential status, age, ethnicity, family of origin, and psychological wellbeing of the father (Pleck, 1997; Fagan et al., 2003; Anderson et al., 2007; Berger et al., 2008; Bronte-Tinkew et al., 2008; Castillo et al., 2011; Perry et al., 2012).

Although, all the above factors have been pointed out as those that influence fatherhood, this study focuses on cultural norms, relational status, socio-economic status (i.e. education and employment levels, and income levels), as well as residential status. These four highlighted factors are considered salient for the purpose of this study because they seem to have a large impact on the nature and the extent of fathers' involvement in their children's lives, specifically among co-resident fathers (Chaudhary et al., 2015).

According to Goldberg (2015), it is imperative to understand factors affecting fatherhood, because it increases awareness and understanding for us on what shapes fathering practices, to better support men. Supporting fathers would include recommending better interventions that could be beneficial in their parenting practice. When fathers are aware of the impact of their fathering practices, children benefit.

The following section, therefore, emphasises the four important factors identified for above: culture, relational status, socio-economic status (education, employment, and income), and, most importantly, the residential status of a father.

2.2.1 Culture. According to Chaudhary et al. (2015), cultural traditions and beliefs have an impact on how fathers perceive their roles and the extent of involvement they have in their children's lives. Fathering practices have often been rooted in sociocultural contexts such as cultural and social beliefs that essentially form who we

become as humans, through traits we embrace (Cabrera et al., 2000; Marsiglio et al., 2000; Albertyn, 2009; Cruz et al., 2011; Idang, 2015). Therefore, the differences in cultural beliefs are likely to influence unique parenting practices (Marsiglio et al., 2000).

In most South African cultures, the role of a father has been that which is a symbol of power, protector as well as a financial provider (Richter & Morrell, 2006; Schwalb et al, 2013). The authority of a man in the household, which places the father as the head of the family tends to normalise patriarchy (Lesejane, 2006). Researchers indicate that culture has largely contributed to men's behaviour pertaining to masculinity, aggression, and chauvinistic behaviour as that which has led to a dominant, withdrawn and a disciplinarian in the family (Mirande´, 1988, 1991; Ortiz & Davis, 2009). The idea of power and provider essentially contribute to unequal gender roles that discourage fathers from becoming involved in child-care and nurturing activities.

Some African traditions such as *ilobolo* and *inhlawulo* have tended to influence whether fathers share a residence with their children or not. The challenge that some fathers face is when they impregnate a woman before they are married and are not able to pay *ilobolo* or *inhlawulo*. The tradition of *ilobolo* involves the groom providing his token of appreciation to the parents of a bride for a customary marriage through a payment in cash or livestock (Posel & Rudwick, 2014). Similarly, *inhlawulo* (fine or damages), a payment that is made by the man or his family as a symbol of respect for breaking woman's virginity and/or impregnating a woman before marriage (Hunter, 2006). In the event that the father is unable to pay *ilobolo* or *inhlawulo,* some families from the mother's side would not allow him to share a home with his children and partner, which could ultimately impact his active involvement with them (Mkhize, 2006).

2.2.2 Socio-economic status. Socio-economic status, which is generally comprised of education, employment, and income levels, has been shown to influence how men practice fatherhood (Bronte-Tinkew et al., 2007; Castillo et al., 2011). The body of research suggests that the positioning of one's socio-economic status has a positive influence in shaping a more involved, responsible, connected and attuned father toward children (Tamis-LeMonda & Cabrera, 1999; Mukoma, 2003; Richter & Morrell, 2006).

Educational level. Education is one of the commonly reported measures of socio-economic status that is likely to have an impact on families (Harris & Morgan, 1991) as it also influences the job opportunities one has access to. The types of jobs might also impact whether fathers get to live with their children or not. Dermott (2014) indicated that low paying jobs that involve long working hours are usually one of the reasons that keep fathers away from their children. Similarly, some high paying jobs, such as being a top executive, who travels on business trips that essentially require spending more time away from home (Dermott, 2014). Therefore, father's level of education is likely to shape his parenting practice.

In addition, studies suggest that the father's education level has significant benefits in respect of the involvement with his children - skills he may possess to seek knowledge around parenting and understanding children's developmental needs (Yeung et al., 2001; Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Craig, 2006; Martin et al., 2007; Madhavan et al., 2008; Holmes et al., 2010). The exposure to knowledge can also allow fathers to become unprejudiced on egalitarian views about parenting, as well as in maintaining open communication and interaction with their children (Harris & Morgan, 1991). Although higher education does not create stronger relationships between a

father and a child, it can catalyse more resources that can enrich children's lives (Harris & Morgan, 1991).

Employment level and income. South Africa is a country that has been stricken by poverty, which is highly prevalent among the Black population group. According to Statistics South Africa's Poverty Trends (2015), Black Africans comprise 93% of the overall population of South Africans living in poverty. It is the lack of employment that has resulted in poverty – a challenge that has led to most men separating from their families in search of better job opportunities – leaving children behind to be raised by mothers, grandparents or other extended family members (Richter & Morrell, 2006). During apartheid, racial segregation restricted Black South Africans from the cities. This system set Black people aside in the rural areas away from economic infrastructure, and they were only allowed in the cities for purposes of work (Townsend et al., 2006; Hosegood & Madhavan, 2012; Morrell et al., 2016). Most Black Africans, especially men, who were primary providers in their families, started migrating to urban areas in search of better job opportunities (Richter & Morrell, 2006; Schwalb et al., 2013). Most of these opportunities were found in the mines, industries, domestic works, and commercial farms (Townsend et al., 2006; Hosegood & Madhavan, 2012; Schwalb et al., 2013).

The living conditions for these migrant labourers in the cities were often unsatisfactory, overcrowded and uninhabitable (e.g. hostels. commercial farms), and this made it almost impossible for fathers to live with their families, i.e. children, wives or partners (Ramphele, 1989; Ulicki & Crush, 2007). According to Makusha and Richter (2014, pp. 984), the migrant labour system was the "main cause of the low rate of the co-residence between Black fathers and their children in South Africa".

The separation of families due to the apartheid system gave rise to fathers that

managed their households through financial provision, physical strength, practical skills, and cultural values and beliefs (Townsend et al., 2006; Hosegood & Madhavan, 2012). Although fathers were inaccessible and disengaged with respect to children's day-to-day activities, being a breadwinner became the only disposable resource they had, knew, and perceived to be sufficient to raise children (Townsend et al., 2006; Hosegood & Madhavan, 2012).

Another great concern is the issue of some traditional practices (as highlighted in the section of culture) that require a man's financial ability to have access to his children. According to Mkhize (2006), unemployment and poverty are some factors that make it difficult for some men to fulfil certain traditional practices, such as payment of *ilobolo.* Mkhize (2006, p. 184) further indicated that the financial inability of performing cultural rituals has "robbed many men of the opportunity to play the fatherly role in raising their children".

2.2.3 Relational status. The relationship status between the mother and father of the child is another factor that can influence parenting practices. If the relationship is disrupted, parenting can be threatening to children's wellbeing and development. Researchers have found that marital satisfaction between spouses has more favourable effects towards children's development and may result in greater paternal involvement (Harris & Morgan, 1991; Coiro & Emery, 1998). These claims resonate with the findings of the quantitative study by Smith (2008), which was conducted in Gauteng among English and Afrikaans speaking men fathering children younger than 13 years. Their study's findings reinforced that the stronger the marriage bond, the more positive men perceive their involvement with their children to be. For example, positive paternal involvement is largely based on the assumption that father's activities are also family

activities and become more enjoyable if spouses are compatible (Harris & Morgan, 1991).

Conversely, Coiro and Emery (1998) argued that when the marital relationship is endangered, the effects could be unfavorable for the upbringing of children. Therefore, threatened marital disruption tends to weaken the quality of father-child relationship, and, according to Goldberg and Easterbrooks (1984), this marital chaos has more impact and damage on fathers.

Although positive benefits have been reported among fathers in the union of marriage (or cohabiting), there have also been undesirable aspects that are likely to influence father engagement in the household (Hofferth & Anderson, 2003). For example, some mothers devalue men's contributions in parenting, as they continue to reject the father's equal partnership and seek to control men's roles within their homes. This could be informed by the social stereotypes and the title that has been imposed on mothers as being nurturers and primary care givers (Burgess, 1998; Perry et al., 2012).

The inequality among parents has also been experienced in medical spaces, where medical professionals often give priorities to mothers on issues relating to child-care (Perälä-Littunen, 2007; Huusko et al., 2018). The belief that mothers are uniquely connected and possess an innate ability to care for their children more than fathers, could also explain the gender division in parenting as well as the view that the fathers' position is secondary in childrearing (Cowdery & Knudson-Martin, 2005). It is therefore evident that fatherhood is not a 'stand-alone' but is constructed in negotiation with motherhood (Dermott, 2014).

Finally, the following section will discuss how residential status influences fathering among men, which is the area of interest in this study.

2.3 Resident and non-resident fatherhood

Recent research has cited family structure and father-child living arrangements (residential or non-residential) as being one of the major factors shaping fathering in general (Ferguson, 2016). However, the vast amount of research has focused on non-resident fathers (divorced or unmarried, abusive and absent). The focus on non-resident fathers and how researchers have written and constructed absent fatherhood, without properly investigating factors that lead to absence, has somehow contributed toward the negative and pathologising narrative about men, particularly among Black communities (Mavungu, 2013; Van den Berg & Makusha, 2018).

This section defines co-resident fatherhood and explores the effects of the residential status (co-resident and non-resident) on fathers and the ways in which they parent their children. Jenkins (2006) defines non-resident fathers as those men that are:

> *"biological fathers of children with whom they do not share the same home address. As well as those fathers who are divorced or separated and those who were never married to (or have never lived with) the child's mother, this potentially includes those fathers who are incarcerated, and those who are refused contact with their children because of court orders"* (p. 184).

For this study, two definitions have been identified to describe a co-resident father. Van den Berg and Makusha (2018, p. 4) regard a co-resident father as a man that shares the same household with the child for "four or more days per week". Townsend et al. (2006) also support this definition and refer to a co-resident father as a man who spends "regular" nights in the same household as children. For this study, we adopt the definition by Van den Berg and Makusha (2018) on the state of South Africa's fathers because it uses a quantifiable measure (number of nights) to justify the presence of a father in the home.

A resident father who shares a home with his children often has greater access to his children, compared to a non-resident father, depending on the type of involvement (Arditti & Keith, 1993). Bzostek (2008) uses eight measures to measure father involvement, using the number of days in a week that the resident father participates in child activities. These activities include reading stories to the child, telling stories to the child, singing songs and nursery rhymes with the child, hugging the child, telling the child he loves them, telling the child that he appreciates something the child did, playing imaginary games with the child, and playing inside with toys such as blocks with the child.

When a father shares a home with his children, both father and children benefit. In fact, Perry et al. (2012) noted in the African American Healthy Marriage Initiative (2003) that being a co-resident father living with children and partner is what men need to become fathers, role models and leaders. According to Eggebeen and Knoester (2001), co-resident men are likely to be healthy, happy, have better social interactions with families and the community, and stable employment, when compared to non-resident men. Furthermore, the results of the study by Cunningham et al. (2010) which was conducted in northern KwaZulu-Natal households and aimed to assess the prenatal development of children, found that co-resident fathers that were accessible to the mothers of their children during pregnancy, were likely to have a healthy baby with a healthy weight – due to the source of support they provided. Therefore, it is worth noting that the residential status of a father not only has a positive effect on children, but can also be highly beneficial to the fathers themselves, as well as the pregnant mothers of unborn children (Eggebeen & Knoester, 2001; Cunningham et al., 2010).

Similarly, researchers have highlighted several advantages in respect of the well-being of children sharing a home with an involved father (Marsiglio et al., 2000;

Lamb, 2004). These include children's higher cognitive ability, socio-emotional development, higher academic achievement, healthy peer relationships, language development, psychological wellbeing, intimate physical care, better education, play, emotional engagement, and higher quality father–child relationships and monitoring (Lewis & Lamb, 2003; Pleck & Masciadrelli, 2004; Flouri, 2005; Bronte-Tinkew et al., 2008; Xu & Zhang, 2008; Waldfogel et al., 2010; Castillo et al., 2011; Hosegood & Madhavan, 2012; Perry et al., 2012; Shwalb et al., 2013).

Despite the benefits and advantages of a co-resident father in relation to a developing child, the presence of a father in the same household with his children may also be detrimental to them. Research has shown that living with a violent or antisocial father can be more harmful to children than living with no father at all (DeKlyen et al., 2006). Eggebeen and Knoester (2001) provided relevant evidence that fathers with dependent children were likely to spend more hours at work, possibly because this is the time where most fathers realise and acknowledge the importance of their provider role toward the children. However, spending more time at work would mean that children are growing up without the involvement of fathers.

Researchers have indicated that some fathers at times command respect from children using harsh disciplinary methods, which are often influenced by patriarchal cultural beliefs that can expose children to abuse (Makusha & Richter, 2014; Gilbert et al., 2009). This behaviour is common among fathers that are heavy substance abusers (e.g. alcohol), who tend to exercise their masculine powers and essentially lead them to become insensitive, unemotional and abusive (Makusha & Richter, 2014). This is supported by several reported cases of child sexual abuse by fathers or stepfathers, which remain shocking. The ABS Personal Safety Survey (2005) found that 13.5 % of participants experienced sexual abuse from their fathers or stepfathers. In the article

‘Child sex abuse by parents on rise’, from Pretoria News (2012, December 20), a 38-year-old man from Pretoria was found guilty of raping and sexually assaulting his biological minor daughter since she was 7 years old. Research has highlighted that these kinds of abuse have negative effects on children’s psychological wellbeing, as well as their development into adulthood (Makusha & Richter, 2014). Although I advocate for fathers to be actively involved in children’s lives, it is as important that children are protected from harmful fathers through things like interventions that teach men to become better in their parenting practices.

2.4 Evolving fatherhood practice

Research studies have associated father involvement with financial provision (Eggebeen & Knoester, 2001; Hosgood & Madhavan, 2012). Over the years as cultural and social norms evolved, so did the role of fathers. Paternal roles transitioned from traditional tasks, which included a man as a breadwinner, protector, disciplinarian and being authoritarian – to being an “expressive, nurturing, emotionally connected, more egalitarian, intimate” father to his children (Eggebeen & Knoester, 2001, p. 381; Smith, 2008, p. 56; Hosegood & Madhavan, 2012; Perry et al., 2012).

Most men however seem to not have adjusted well to the idea of an emerging modern father, because even when they show willingness to be involved in the nurturing roles in their children’s lives, some still find it difficult to actually perform in these activities (Smith, 2008). Therefore, the idea of a modern father in the household, particularly in a country like South Africa, where men are socialised not to take part in domestic and child-care activities became a challenge (Smith, 2008). This challenge could possibly result from the expectation of fathers to parent in a particular way that is in line with Western norms – with social, cultural, economic, and political contexts that vary from those of Black Africans (Lamb et al., 1985; Madhavan & Roy, 2012).

Therefore, the set standards of a modern father may exclude most Black men in South Africa, who are affected by high levels of poverty (Statistics SA Poverty Trends Report, 2015).

The following section will uncover the subjective perceptions and experiences among Black resident fathers.

2.5 Perceptions and experiences of fatherhood

Over the years, policies and programmes that promoted and encouraged paternal involvement, for example, the extension of family responsibility leave to 10 days for fathers in South Africa (Labour Laws Amendment Act, 2018) were introduced in South Africa (Makusha & Richter, 2014). While this is commendable, the number of days added are still very little as they also apply to other family responsibilities. For example, if a man has to use the ten days for other family responsibilities, such as time off required to prepare for the funeral of a close family member, he will have no days left in the event that he has a child born in the same year. This implies that such policies should be reviewed to explicitly cater for paternal leave and not the extension of family responsibility leave.

The South African Children's Act 38 of 2005 continues to improve in terms of protecting children and highlighting their primary needs, through elaborating on the role of parents. Social movements and some individuals are starting to use social media platforms to promote the campaigns that encourage positive father involvement – such as calling for baby-changing tables to be installed in men's restrooms in public spaces.

Fathers have become more engaged in child-care activities that were historically known to be performed by mothers. These activities include "spending more quality time with children, attending their children's school functions, attending health centers

with children who require immunisations, and walking and driving children to and from school" (Makusha & Richter, 2014, p. 985).

Just like in many other countries, since industrial times and even today, fathers in South Africa continued to become primary breadwinners in their families (Schwalb et al., 2013). Surveys have focused their attention on men and financial contribution, e.g., food, clothing, school fees and school – which mainly explore the financial aspect of fatherhood. (Hosegood & Madhavan, 2012). However, the findings of the Co-op, U. K. (2013) study that was conducted in Gugulethu (Cape Town) argued a view of a breadwinner father, but brought forward an exceptional idea of a man who is also willing and eager to nurture his children. Co-op, U. K. (2013) concluded that fathers (both co-resident and non-resident) considered their involvement to be more than just financial support for children and involved emotional nurturing and unconditional love for the development of their children.

Although fathers showed willingness to participate in their children's lives in activities other than financial provision, they still did not display high levels of participation in child-care activities. Some still considered child-care activities as something that was the responsibility of a mother, and when they got involved, they regarded that as helping the mother of the child. The findings of a quantitative study among 400 English and Afrikaans speaking married men in Gauteng Province on perceptions and experiences of fatherhood in South Africa by Smith (2008), suggested that some men still did not show high levels of child-care involvement. However, those that considered themselves to be involved in child-care activities believed it was fair to expect men to be actively involved in such activities (Smith, 2008).

Eggebeen and Knoester (2001) examined father involvement among 2310 co-resident men living with their minor children. They measured the time fathers spent

with their minor children in various activities. These activities included going on an outing away from home, playing together, working together, having private talks, and helping with homework or reading. They found evidence that co-resident fathers were less likely to be involved in leisure activities away from home with their children. However, the involvement was dependent on their socio-economic status and the children's age (Smith, 2008). This suggests that some fathers consider themselves as having an option to select the type of roles they prefer. Featherstone (2009, p.33) refers to the idea of fathers that select roles which they prefer when they parent their children as "cherry picking".

Hohmann-Mariot (2011) conducted a quantitative study on co-parenting and father involvement in the US and they drew a sample of mothers and resident fathers with children living with both biological parents. In this study, the findings suggested that a father's involvement in day-to-day child-care activities was influenced by whether they had a say or could take decisions in the household. Although this study was not conducted in South Africa, the results reported by fathers can be applied in South Africa to help understand the importance of allowing men's voices on issues relating specifically to child-care to be heard in the household and the impact it can have in their parenting practices.

Different views have emerged from research studies conducted in the US among Black co-resident fathers – married and cohabiting (Bulanda, 2009; Coles, 2001). Bulanda (2009) found that the most used parenting style among Black fathers was authoritative – a method most men associated with the best child outcome. In contrast, Coles (2001) argued that co-resident fathers indicated authoritarian and disciplinarian roles as the ones they are less likely to resort to. Most of these fathers cited financial provision, nurturing, talking to children and offering advice as a disciplinary method.

Furthermore, Coles (2001) concluded that Black co-resident fathers' involvement comprised playing with children, promoting children's academic achievement, being interested in children's extra-mural activities, communicating, moral teaching, helping with school work, holding and feeding infants, participating in decision-making, and encouraging children to become strong and independent.

Furthermore, Morrell et al. (2016) supported these claims, through the quantitative study conducted in South Africa (Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal), and concluded that most fathers were engaged in child-care duties. Although these roles were indicated, some men chose the chores they least preferred to perform, such as communicating on personal matters with children and washing clothes for them. The results emphasised that most fathers generally took their parental role seriously and helping with homework was frequently cited.

Considering all the findings in most studies on resident fatherhood, particularly among Blacks, one can argue that modern fathers have and continue to transition to more non-traditional parenting roles and are involved in parenting their children. Most fathers are found to be responsible, accessible, and engaged. However, the cultural and economic background still poses limitations in their involvement, particularly with roles that include child-care and domestic activities. This shows that the individual's perceptions and own experiences in fathering practices are largely influenced by socio-economic status, cultural and social norms.

It is important that fathers acknowledge and understand their identity as well as the primary needs of their children. This is to ensure that their parenting practice is aligned with the needs of their children, to promote optimal development. The statement is supported by Ogbu (1981), who argued that fathers' meaning of success, love and support can be different from that of a child and can be better explained

through understanding the theories of success within a cultural group. This echoes the notion that fathers' perceptions are learnt from their own historical experiences, knowledge, and insight (Gordon et al., 2013).

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter examined existing literature that relates to the context of this study. The attempt was to explore the main factors that seem to have a greater impact on the nature and the extent of father involvement among co-resident men. Some African cultural practices have made it difficult for men to gain access to their children's lives without performing certain rituals. These rituals require a father to be financially stable. With high unemployment rates in South Africa, some fathers have found it hard to fulfil such rituals. Another concern is the issue of migrant labour system, that has separated most men from their families in search for better opportunities away from their children (and homes).

Studies have focused on the non-resident fathers, and absent fathers, however, the resident fatherhood practices have not been explored, especially among Black Africans. It is crucial to take note of how fatherhood roles have transitioned over the years, and the difficulties fathers have faced in adjusting to emerging modern fatherhood roles, considering their historical cultural practices and broader societal beliefs. Finally, the chapter explores fathers' experiences and how policies and programmes in South Africa have contributed to informing their perceptions in parenting their children.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two sections, which includes the research design and the methodology used. The research design refers to the overall strategy chosen to ensure that the research problem is effectively addressed. The methodology section considers the population group, sampling strategy, data collection, procedure, data analysis, data verification, as well as ethical considerations. It further explores the reflections of the researcher in relation to the entire research process.

3.2 Research design

According to Gellar et al. (2012), a qualitative approach allows participants to share their perspectives without providing them with predefined and limited choices of responses. This study used a qualitative design, and more specifically the exploratory approach, which is largely guided by the research questions to elicit people's feelings, experiences and views about their social situations, as they occurred in their natural settings, while taking cognisance of their unique culture (Boyle, 1994; Blanche, et al., 2006). This method was applied firstly to explore the perceptions and experiences of Black resident fathers in relation to their fathering practices and their involvement in their young children's lives. Secondly, it was done to understand fathers' views in relation to their children's developmental needs. It is argued that exploratory research establishes new insights and resolves ambiguous perceptions through opening a dialogue that leads to further research (Mayer, 2015).

3.3 Methodology

The research methods applied in this study were informed by the research design explained in the previous section. The methods included approaches for recruiting the participants and collecting and analysing data. Furthermore, ethical concerns that

affected this study were discussed, and finally my reflections on the research process were explored. The process of recruiting participants, data collection, and data analysis were important to understand the context around physical, social, and cultural settings of this study. The following sections discuss the recruitment and interviewing processes, as well as consent employed in this study.

3.3.1 Participant's recruitment. The first step I took in the recruitment process involved the use of an internet search of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) that work with fathers in Cape Town, and a list of possible organisations was produced. The internet search approach has been considered as one of the possible methods that could be implemented in the research recruitment process (Koo & Skinner, 2005; Iphofen & Tolich, 2018). Upon identifying the potential participants, the sampling methodology that was suitable for the research design was selected. The sampling technique aimed at facilitating the process of recruiting participants. Therefore, it was critical to ensure that the identified sample represented the population the researcher intended to study (Iphofen & Tolich, 2018).

Sampling is the process of selecting a smaller group that will represent the population under study. This study used purposive sampling, which is a non-probability sampling method used based on the characteristics of the population and the objective of the study. The invitation was purposefully aimed at Black African resident fathers - fathers sharing a residence with their partners and children in Cape Town and have been living with their children from when they were 0 – 17 years old. The objective was that they would speak about their roles and level of engagement with their children, uncover what they understand as being their children's primary needs, as well as the factors that influence their parenting practices.

This was achieved through approaching an organisation that works with fathers

in Cape Town. This is a non-profit organisation that works with government, civil society, and citizens to ensure equitable, healthy and happy relationships among men, women and children in South Africa, and across Africa. The organisation was initially contacted via email with an advertisement that defined the nature of the study and explained what would be required from participants to avoid any misconceptions from participants, when they read through the advertisement (Iphofen & Tolich, 2018). I secured a meeting with the Regional Senior Trainer of the organisation to explain the topic, the inclusion criteria of the participants, informed consent which covered the ethics around the study, as well as the preferred sampling techniques.

Approaching an organisation was intended to access men who are fathers and met the criteria of this study, with the hope that the organisation would assist in applying the method of recruitment that I had explained to them. I highlighted that it was critical that all participants be recruited outside the organisation's existing database, and that they have not benefited from any of the parenting programmes offered by the organisation. This was to allow for the recruited participants to share their 'undiluted' views purely from their historical experiences – not based on how they have been trained by the organisation. Therefore, those men who had attended the programmes offered by the centre were excluded from the sample.

The organisation employed one of their recruiters to approach men that met the indicated criteria from several townships in Cape Town (Mfuleni, Khayelitsha and Gugulethu). These areas were identified because the organisation had their sites in these townships, and this is where most Black communities live in Cape Town. We had agreed with the Regional Senior Trainer, that once they had identified the potential participants, they would provide them with my contact details. Only one participant volunteered to participate and successfully made contact with me. I then managed to

set up an appointment that was convenient for him. The organisation arranged one of their Wellness Centres as the venue to use for conducting the interviews with the participants they had recruited for the study.

On recognising the low response rate from the organisation, a different approach had to be established for sourcing participants for the study. I purposely approached men from my workplace – a government department in Cape Town, and where I also work. The purpose of the study and the participant inclusion criteria were explained. The initial participant referred other potential respondents within the Department.

In addition to purposive sampling, the snowball sampling (referrals) technique was used to access other potential participants. Snowball sampling is a procedure for recruiting participants with the assistance of already interviewed participants, who then refer the researcher to further participants who meet the study criteria (Iphofen & Tolich, 2018). The snowball process is used to reach more participants that would have been difficult to identify by the researcher. According to Sedgwick (2013), participants are likely to be reluctant to be recruited if randomly approached, however, when they are referred by someone they know, they tend to show a certain amount of trust, which they would not otherwise have shown.

The final sample comprised of 12 participants. Out of 12 respondents, one was recruited via the organisation. Nine were recruited from a Government Department through the snowball technique where I had personally approached the initial participant – who then made referrals to others. The last two participants were from my direct contact with previous companies I had worked in. The final 12 recruited participants were diverse in terms of their socio-economic status (area of residence, educational level and occupation), age, and ethnicity. The participants were living in various parts of Cape Town – from the townships, to informal settlements and the

suburbs, and had various occupations, which included, Directors, Deputy Directors, Carpenters, and Admin Clerks. These men were aged 29 to 50 years. Eleven (11) of the men were married, and only one was unmarried, but stayed with his partner and children. One participant was from Zimbabwe, and the rest were South African citizens by birth.

3.3.2 Data collection. The data were collected through individual (face-to-face) semi-structured interviews, using an interview guide (Appendix D) that was divided into two sections. The first section focused on biographical information, while the second included open-ended questions that provided the participants with an opportunity to express their perceptions and experiences of their roles as resident fathers. The use of a guide was meant to direct participants back to the questions related to the study, when they were drifting away from the topic. According to Grindsted (2005), semi-structured interviews create a more ordinary interactive conversation, in a comfortable and natural setting, for understanding how respondents formulate meaning about their world. For example, the use of the semi-structured interviews in this study was meant to allow for open and engaging conversations that allowed participants to express their thoughts and views comfortably. This particular study intended to create a platform that allowed fathers to narrate their stories the way they actually experienced parenting. Furthermore, the probing questions were raised to seek clarity on what participants were saying.

I stopped conducting the interviews with the final participant when similar subjects were becoming more frequent, which meant that themes were saturated. Researchers have referred to saturation as being an acceptable approach that has been commonly used in a qualitative study to determine whether data collection can be discontinued (Guest et al., 2006; Saunders et al., 2018; Weller et al., 2018). Saturation

is defined as the point where the researcher is confident that the data received is widespread and no additional information, themes or codes emerge (Guest et al., 2006; Saunders et al., 2018; Weller et al., 2018).

Most participants were fluent in isiXhosa, and could communicate and understand English, which was their second language. Although they could speak English, it was explained at the onset of the interview that they were at liberty to switch to a language they were more comfortable with and preferred to use (i.e. either their native language or English).

Each interview was audio-recorded, and lasted between 60 and 90 minutes, which was considered appropriate given the nature of the content. The use of a tape recorder was discussed at the start of each interview. According to Fasick (1977), tape recording can make the coding process a lot easier, because it re-creates the interviewing situation and can identify any discrepancies and ambiguities that the interviewer may have missed during the interview. Therefore, the use of a tape recorder during the interview process of this study was to make the transcription process smoother, as well as to create an interactive and more comfortable interview. This allowed the researcher to have better concentration and the opportunity to capture non-verbal gestures.

It was imperative to discuss ethical considerations, to take into account matters that were relevant to and arose during this study. The first few minutes of the interview were used to explain informed consent (Appendix C), which covered confidentiality, the purpose of the study, as well as the agreement for recording of the interview. It was crucial that the participants fully understood the content of the informed consent form before signing. All interviews were conducted in a private closed office, that was safe and confidential and most suitable for identified participants. However, some

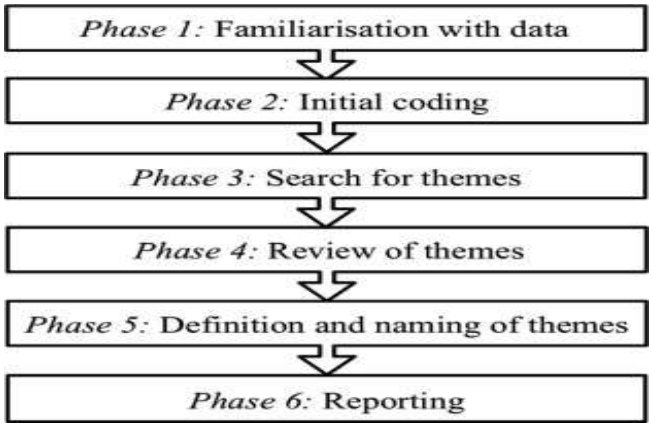
participants preferred a neutral space – such as a restaurant. A signed copy of the consent form was provided to the participant, while the other was filed and kept in a safe lockable compartment so that all the records of the study were available only to the researcher.

3.3.3 Data analysis. All 12 interviews were transcribed verbatim before data analysis. The transcription was done by listening to all the audio recordings and converting it text through typing into a Word document. This transcription method follows from Smit (2002, p. 66) who describes transcription as the process which converts all texts from "interviews, observational notes or memos" into a typed Word document. The transcribed data was then analysed manually using the thematic analysis process.

Thematic analysis was used to analyse data in this study, which simply meant that words, sentences, and paragraphs were described, categorised, or reduced through identifying common links that formed themes (Dey, 1993; Smit, 2002; Seidman, 2006; Charmaz, 2006). The data were further interpreted, theorised and coded into a meaning that intended to identify the perceptions and experiences, as well as the extent of involvement of resident fathers (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Maxwell & Chemiel, 2014). Theorising and eliciting meaning in qualitative data analysis was to ensure that the results were reasoned and argued in relation to the existing literature, in order to answer the research questions of the study (Alasuutari, 1995).

All six phases below in figure 2 used a recursive method, where the movement was back and forth for several times throughout the phases (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Figure 2: Braun and Clarke: Six phases of Thematic Analysis



According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the thematic analysis process follows a six-phase guide, which is a non-linear process that can be used back and forth for several times throughout the phases (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the first phase involved familiarising myself with data, which began when I was conducting individual interviews with all participants during the data collection process. This interaction made it a lot more convenient for the analysis process, because of the data knowledge and understanding I had already attained. This was helpful for immersion in the data, and essentially becoming more familiar with it.

Familiarising myself with data incorporated the process of transcribing, where I listened to the tape recording over and over, as well as writing down word-for-word into a Word document for accuracy. This also involved reading and re-reading data, while capturing points that I found critical, and in some instances words that were emerging more often. This was meant to identify pre-dominant themes and categories, which aimed at a particular feature within the data, and for ensuring that I did not look for any data beyond what the respondents had said (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Smit, 2002).

Braun and Clarke (2006) referred to phase two as code generation, where I started grouping the texts into segments to develop themes. The focus was on data

relating to factors influencing fatherhood, fathers' understanding of their children's primary needs, and perceptions, roles and experiences fathers played when parenting their children across the data. This led to generation of initial themes, which was done manually. For each grouped data set, which formed a theme, I then added a relevant heading, which matched the extracted data.

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), searching for themes after developing the initial list of identified codes with matching data extracts is imperative. I started searching for predominant themes, through sorting the recognised codes and themes that could possibly work better together. Similar codes, themes and sub-themes were collated. Some of the codes I had noted could not fit in any of the themes. However, at this stage, I was still reluctant to discard any of the codes until I was certain that I had thoroughly gone through the data.

I started going through the codes repeatedly, for a comprehensive understanding of the data, until I was confident that all themes related to the perceptions, roles and experiences of men and their fathering practices. This included re-looking at themes that needed to be "combined, refined and separated, or discarded" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 91). For those themes that did not relate to the aims of the study, I discarded, and eventually ended the process, when I was satisfied with all the codes, themes, and sub-themes.

I started to name and define all final themes with relevant and clear headings, in preparation for the write-up. At this point, I was almost at the end of analysis. This stage included capturing the meaning of the data and the story it was telling, as well as how it answered the research questions and subsequently fitted the aim of the overall study.

3.3.4 Translation. The interviews were conducted in IsiXhosa and English, and

participants switched between these two languages at any point during the interview. The data were analysed and interpreted in the original language. The translation was done after the interpretation to make sense of any cultural traits and meaning that might have occurred in the text (Durdureanu, 2011). It was therefore important that the researcher understands that translation is not only about transmission of systematic words, grammar, and phrases, but also about a deeper meaning of what the participants were communicating (Durdureanu, 2011). I ensured that I confirmed and requested clarity for any unfamiliar phrases and jargon that came out during the interviews, so that I could use it properly in the context of its culture and meaning.

3.3.5 Data verification. It may be complex to evaluate if the research is assessing what it actually intends to study when the data cannot be measured and quantified (Guest et al., 2012), but is based on participants' perceptions and lived experiences. Lamb et al.'s (1985) conceptual framework of involved fatherhood was used as a foundation of this study. In addition to this model, the literature and various arguments were consulted to support, explain, compare and contextualise this research study. These references made the content of the study much more credible and dependable.

During the data-collection phase, a pilot was conducted to ensure that I was asking relevant questions which were meant to address the research questions. This was another technique of enhancing the credibility and dependability of the study (Guest et al., 2012). Lincoln and Guba (1985) referred to credibility as the "confidence in the truth of finding, including accurate understanding of the context", while dependability spoke to consistency of the research process (Ulin et al., 2012, pp. 25, 26).

3.3.6 Ethical consideration. Ethical principles are meant to address any issues that may arise during the research process, while protecting the rights of the research

participants (Orb et al., 2001). These ethical rights include avoiding harm, confidentiality, voluntary participation, benefits, risks, and anonymity. Ethical clearance was granted by the Psychology Department's Research Ethics Committee at the University of Cape Town. The informed consent form, which pertained to the ethics of the study, was made available to each participant before the interview was conducted. I explained and made sure that the participants understood the content and meaning of the form before signing and tape-recording.

No physical or psychological risk harmed the participants during this study. However, I had recognised the sensitivity of the research and anticipated the potential distress that some participants might experience when sharing their stories. During the interviews, some participants acknowledged how much they downplayed the intensity of their background. In such instances, I provided the participants with Counselling Lifeline, Western Cape's contact details, and further checked with them if they still wanted to continue or would rather stop the interview. The decision to continue under distressed conditions would mean that I valued obtaining data more than I cared about participants' vulnerable states (Orb et al., 2001). Lifeline is the NGO that offers confidential and anonymous lay-counseling services, primarily by telephone, at no consultation cost. Orb et al. (2001) reinforced the importance of protecting the human subjects or participants and guarding against violations of human rights in the name of any kind of research.

Confidentiality is another imperative aspect of protecting human subjects. The participants shared their lived experiences and realities. Thus, this information deserved to be treated with privacy. I undertook strict precautions to safeguard personal information throughout the study. The information was kept in safe storage and was only accessible by those involved in the study within the limit of the University policy.

In addition, the identity of the participants was also protected. Participants were given a choice to use pseudonyms during the interviews with the researcher and the participants' real names were not used in the research report.

The informed consent form stated clearly that participation was voluntary. Bankowski et al. (1989) emphasises that each participant has a right to freely decide to participate and the equal right to withdraw at any time without penalty. The informed consent form is not a once-off negotiation of trust, but the researcher needs to continuously renegotiate with the participants to ensure that they are still comfortable and feel safe to participate in the study (Munhall, 1988; Morse & Field, 1995; Kvale, 1996).

3.3.7 Reflections on the research process. At the onset of data collection, the man who was my contact at the organisation I partnered with during the recruitment of participants, suggested meeting with the identified participants before I could meet with them. He mentioned that in his experience of working with men, he found them uncomfortable in having meetings with women, and he anticipated that I may also encounter difficulties with them. He also revealed that some of these men often sensed that women were biased and judgmental towards them – particularly on topics that require them to speak of their families and children.

This was evident when I approached some of the men, where they would mention things like "is this not meant to judge how we discipline our children?" Some would even ask if I had children. The issue of my gender came through as a concern when I was conducting the interviews. Some men showed signs of discomfort when the issues relating to communication with children – particularly about sex, masturbation and love, transpired. It was difficult for them to name the genitals with their proper

names, and at times they would say that it was not easy for them to utter such words in my presence, due to my gender.

Most fathers were working during the day, and scheduling appointments that would suit them became a challenge. Some would ask about conducting the interview after hours, or at weekends, while they reported their discomfort in sharing some of their experiences in the presence of their partners. I was also as uncomfortable, because I thought they may not be able to speak freely in the presence of their families, and this could potentially skew the results of the study. I was also worried about meeting men after hours and during weekends on the basis that their partners could worry about having their husbands conduct a private interview with an unmarried woman.

Being a single mother, myself may have created an impression that I am biased and would be judgmental toward fathers' perceptions. However, I emphasised the aims of the study and that the focus was on understanding the perceptions and experiences of Black residential fathers, because they matter. Furthermore, listening to participants' narratives with empathy and in a non-judgmental way allowed them to freely express themselves during the interviews.

Conducting interviews with some of the participants from the building I work in was also not an easy decision for me. I had to think deeper about the implications it may have on the results of the study. My main concern was that the participants may be reluctant to share sensitive information about their backgrounds and even their families – because they may see me in the near future. However, the informed consent form and understanding the importance of confidentiality in as far as the study is concerned, as well as that the majority had not seen me before, made it easier to develop trust with them.

It was interesting to observe how the majority of fathers mentioned a feeling of relief, particularly after talking about their own fathers, and their upbringing. One stated that, “I feel like I am in a therapy session, my shoulders feel tight, but you make it sound so smooth”; “… it was intense but felt like a debriefing session”. Some even admitted not having shared about this part of their lives with anyone. However, the interview questions were not intimidating, and the space felt safe enough for them to share openly.

When asked about their role, I observed there was a moment of silence, because they initially could not come up with anything except financial provision, and often this was the area I needed to probe further.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the use of the qualitative research design, focusing on the explorative approach. It deliberated on the methodological processes pertaining to the data collection, sampling strategies and data analysis. The research method described the context and the setting in which the study took place, which could also be beneficial for the readers to make their own interpretation of data.

Discussing ethical consideration was important because it protected the rights of the participants by ensuring the anonymity of the participants as well as confidentiality of the information they shared in this study. This included storing the consent forms that I collected from the participants safely. In addition, data verification and my reflections on the research process were discussed. Reflecting on the research process made me aware of the way in which my identity as a single mother could impact this process. Therefore, it was important that I acknowledge the impact my gender and marital status could have when conducting interviews with participants.

The following chapter will present the details of the data analysis and the research findings.

Chapter 4: Research findings

This chapter presents the data collected from semi-structured interviews with 12 Black co-resident fathers in Cape Town, with the aim of understanding their perceptions and experiences of fathering, as well as the extent of their involvement in their children's lives. The data in this chapter are organised into two sections. The first section describes participants' demographic information, which includes an in-depth discussion of their ages, education levels, and area of residence. The second section discusses fathers' presence in children's lives as well as the types of roles and their level of involvement in parenting their children. The findings of this study suggest that co-resident fathers are generally present and are willing to be involved in their children's lives. The majority of the respondents still considered financial provision as the most critical contribution in their children's upbringing. However, their levels of accessibility, engagement and responsibility still vary according to their values and beliefs, and this is highly motivated by their historical experiences.

4.1 Participants' demographics

Figure 3 below illustrates the demographic information of the participants that were interviewed in this study.

Figure 3: Participants' demographic information

No.	Pseudonyms	Ages	Place of birth	Current Town	Education	Occupation	Marital status	No. of children
1	Mthombeni[3]	49	Port Elizabeth	Edgemead	Diploma	HR Practitioner	M	4
2	Mvelo	39	Butterworth	Cape Town	Honours	Deputy Director	M	3
3	Mndebele	30	Eastern Cape	Crossroads	Matric	Driver	M	1
4	Zeth	43	Durban	Century City	Honours	Director	M	2
5	Dumi	29	Cape Town	Khayelitsha	Matric	Clerk	S	2
6	Ndalo	41	Eastern Cape	Zonneblom	Post matric	Clerk	M	1

7	Mbeje	42	Eastern Cape	Delft	Diploma	Administrator	M	3
8	Jooma	45	Eastern Cape	Kraaifontein	Grade 8	Clerk	M	2
9	Tapiwa	45	Zimbabwe	Dunoon	Certificate	Carpenter	M	5
10	Zolani	47	Eastern Cape	Gugulethu	Matric	Clerk	M	3
11	Mnqobi	44	PE	Mfuleni	Post matric	Assistant Director	M	4
12	Thoba	45	KZN	Cape Town	B-Degree	Engineer	M	2

[3]Pseudonyms were used in this study for anonymity to ensure that participants remain confidential. Like this participant, all other participants were given pseudonyms.

All participants were Black men aged 29 to 50 years, with children ranging in ages between 8 months to 17 years at the time of the study. All 12 participants were living with their partners. Out of 12, 11 were married and one was cohabiting with his partner. Eleven (11) out of 12 participants were from South Africa, and one from Zimbabwe who had been living in South Africa since 2007 with his wife and three of his children who were born in South Africa. Ten participants were employed by public and private organisations and two were self-employed (one as the Managing Director of his own company and the other, a carpenter). All participants were within a nuclear family structure and had between one and three children.

4.1.1 Ages of the participants.

Seventy-five percent (75%) of participants were born between 1965 and 1979, and formed part of what Erickson (2010, p. 6) refers to as generation X. The remaining 25% were born between 1980 and 1998 and belonged to Generation Y (Millennial) (Erickson, 2010, p. 6). Researchers found that both these generations tend to be more involved with their children compared to previous generations (Perry et al., 2012; Mooney et al., 2013). In the same way, the findings of this study revealed that most of the respondents were involved in their children's lives. Similar to the results of the

Fragile Families and Child Well-being study which revealed that resident fathers are "typically older (>30 years of age)" (Castillo et al., 2011, p. 1343).

4.1.2 Educational level.

Sixty-seven percent (67%) of fathers had completed their tertiary level education, which ranged from the national certificate, diploma, Bachelors degree, up to an Honours degree, while 25% had matric, and eight percent had grade 8 as their highest attained education. Researchers have found a positive association between educational attainment and access to better job opportunities, because most organisations tend to use it as a measure of a person's skills and productivity (Benson et al., 2004; Ng & Feldman, 2009). Likewise, the current study found a link between fathers' levels of education and the type of jobs they were involved in, such as Administration Clerk, Carpenter and Driver. Although all participants were involved in their children's lives, those fathers with lower levels of education were unable to fully engage in some of their children's activities, due to their work commitments and the challenges around leave negotiations with their employer.

4.2 Father's presence in children's lives

All 12 participants reported that they were pleased to participate in their parenting roles right at the outset of their pregnancy and were willing to support their partners and unborn children. Based on Lamb et al.'s (1985) theoretical model, most respondents showed some level of engagement, accessibility, and responsibility in their parenting practices. However, the extent to which they were accessible and engaged varied according to their motivation, institutional practices and the infrastructure in the public spaces (for example, maternity wards in public hospitals and lack of baby-changing tables in men's restrooms).

The motivation included parenting skills, which were highly informed by social norms (families), socio-economic status (fathers' educational levels and employment), and cultural values (traditional practices and beliefs).

Fathers in this study have shifted from being mere breadwinners, protectors, and authoritarians to being more accessible and engaged men, who can spend time and communicate with children, play, help with homework, and care for their children. Ndalo reported:

> *"I know what she likes, so in our room I will put her in the bed, and we will watch and play and stuff like that. She likes watching there [the mountain view], whilst she plays, and then I have a projector where I play our favourite movies and stuff and Disney movies, and that is how I interact with her most of the time, and I will read Bible stories".*

Mndebele also indicated his involvement:

> *"If I am not working, usually I am the first one to wake up. First thing, I boil the water, and make porridge for all of us, my wife and my daughter. While I am still waiting for the porridge to get ready, I wash dirty dishes and sweep the floor in our home. Once the pap is ready, I dish up for all of us. I also prepare milk for my daughter. I also change and bath her, and I do sometimes wash her dirty clothes."*

Although all participants were in some way involved in their children's lives, they participated in different types of parenting roles and their level of involvement was as unique as their fatherhood experiences were. The following section highlights salient themes that were identified during the interviews in this study.

4.3 Types of father involvement

All 12 participants were asked about their main roles in parenting their children. The

responsibility of providing for their children financially was highly salient among all respondents in the sample. This was followed by the support they provided for their children's educational needs, discipline, protection, and role modelling. Mbeje reported:

> *"I made sure that I installed burglar doors, and all windows and doors are properly fitted to ensure a safe environment for my daughter. I was the only one working, and I was happy that I was trying to be a responsible man and father. The way I see it, I am a responsible father, who is doing his duties to care for my wife and daughter".*

Ndalo also commented, *"I must make sure that he goes to a good school, and gets good education; she must be respectful, and disciplined."*

These statements were evidence that providing materially as well as protecting the family and children was indeed important for fathers, as they believed these roles should be performed by themselves, and when that happens, they were grateful and relieved.

The participants also responded positively to issues related to accessibility and engagement (direct father-child interaction), which included child-care, and spending time with children. Mthombeni reported thus:

> *"It was more in my mind and being conscious to look for those opportunities [of ensuring that I involve myself]. When she [wife] starts to look for something, and I would ask if I can do this etc.? I am glad you've asked this question, because guess what, it is happening to traditional men, because as a traditional man, as soon as you instruct me, I am not going to do it. That is the big challenge. So, what do you do as a traditional man, step in first, so that it is not an instruction from a woman – that was my approach. It makes it easier, especially when it*

comes to my children. My approach was that, let me act before my wife passes on an instruction. I mean we have a saying as 'boys' that says when your wife says to you push that chair in, you want to first forget her voice that it dies out before you go and do it. Otherwise, if you say push that chair in and I jump and do it, I am no difference to a child."

It is worth noting that these fathers were present in their children's development and continued to seek ways to participate – regardless of their cultural background. At times, social and cultural norms created a barrier between fathers' attitudes and actual behaviours. The difference in their attitude and behaviour was noted when some participants themselves expressed emphasis on the provider role for their children. Ndalo's daughter was 8 months at the time of the interview. He reported that he experienced feelings of joy when his daughter expected something from him, and he associated his daughter's expectation with financial provision, which essentially made him happy:

"I am learning as I go along that those fears are just mhhhh, are unfounded, I find fatherhood quite interesting. What is interesting is to know that she [daughter] is starting to feel that I am her father, always expecting me to give her something, so being able to financially provide for her – it makes me happy.

4.3.1 Financial provision. There were indications that most participants considered financial support as critical right from insemination and throughout the different phases of the child's development. In their statements, they indicated support such as medical aid provision for prenatal assessment. These claims supported Martin et al.'s (2007) suggestions, which argued that fathers' involvement extends right from the prenatal phase onwards. Fathers' early involvement with children results in positive

benefits for the child's health, early learning capacities, academic achievement, psychological outcomes, and behavior (Hernandez & Brandon, 2002).

Although most respondents referred to financial support as the best care they could provide, they still spoke little about child-care and helping their partners with domestic activities. According to Thoba: "*I tried to be the best support that I could best be, by making sure that she [wife] was taken care of financially"*. Mnqobi also reported, *"Luckily, it was around the time I was employed at the Department of the Premier, and I had medical aid."*

The emphasis of financial provision in Thoba and Mnqobi's narratives above reinforced that in areas where fathers consider themselves as being involved, they often refer to financial provision, and still not much about accessibility and engagement. The lack of child-care in the statements above cemented the common belief around mothers as being natural and better nurturers in the homes than fathers (Dowd, 1996). It is probable that participants were mostly influenced by the ideological factors of fatherhood, which included masculinity and the father, the material provider. However, it can be suggested that mothers also contributed to forming the socially constructed ideas about fatherhood, which played a part in becoming the force that dictated fathers' incompetence in relation to child-care in the households.

Fathers reduced to financial providers by partners. All participants reported that they supported and became involved with their unborn children by accompanying their partners to purchase baby essentials and attended scheduled prenatal visits with a medical professional. In the case study that involved the interpretation of Section 21 of the Childrens Act 38 of 2005, the High Court of South Africa KwaZulu-Natal, local division, Durban (2013), suggested that supporting the mother of an unborn child relates to the health and wellbeing of a child and it thus considers such responsibility as

maintenance. However, the findings in this study suggested that mothers still took stronger decisions and led the preparation process for their unborn children. This could suggest what Pruett (1987, p. 116) defines as "fathering in terms of her [mother] own needs and perceptions, delineating her mate as … financial centre". Mothers' strong will in making decisions in this regard, is likely to reduce the level of a father's involvement with their children to being a mere breadwinner. *"I would not lie to you, she took most of the decisions in terms of buying. I supported her financially, but she took most of those decisions, buying the clothes etc."* Thoba reported.

Zeth also reported:

> *"Well, in terms of buying a car seat, and other things, she was the one responsible. Sometimes I would go with her when she asked me to. I did not mind that; she was happy that I was supporting her financially. She did not expect that I would accompany her when she was buying things from the shops, but I wasn't the one who would say let's choose this dress or that. She was making all those decisions."*

4.3.2 Education. Another aspect of a father's responsibility that involves financial support is education, which all participants considered as being critical for their children's development. They reported that paying school fees, arranging for transport to school, as well as helping children with homework, were their responsibilities in the home. *"During the week, I am the first person to wake up, I wake up at 4 am, prepare for my 9-year-old son. At 5 am his school transport is at the gate to pick him up"* according to Mbeje. Of note was the level of commitment Mbeje showed in tasks that involved the education of their children, which also articulated the nurturing side and willingness to extend his participation to activities commonly known to be for mothers – such as preparing for the children before going to school.

Zeth reported that he personally dropped off and picked up his children from school daily. This gave him the opportunity to observe the child in different settings, as well as to have impromptu engagements with class teachers:

> *"I am involved in taking kids to school, doing homework, playing with the kids. I basically do everything, and typically in the morning I take Tumi (daughter) to school and then the boy. I remember with Tumi, Grade 2, she is 8 years, so what happens in the first week or so, she is in the playground, I am dropping her off in the morning, mhhhh, typically you come early like around 7:30 am. So as parents, we just drop them and then we hang around, you see them play, whatever, so I also do that, drop her and allow her to go and play, just observing".*

Helping with homework. All fathers reported that they were involved and eager to help their children with doing their homework:

> *"I don't take what they say such as homework at face value, because the nature of the homework is that you don't want to do it – offering the support in assisting them with school work and all that"*, Mvelo reported.

Mbeje acknowledged how much his level of education has contributed and it made it easier to help his children with their homework:

> *"It's me again on the homework. You know, it helps to be an educated father, actually to be parents that went to school, just because homework these days is very challenging. When I get home late from work, I make sure that the one [child] playing in the street, I call him for homework. You know children, when they are in the street, they will say, Tata [Daddy] – there is no homework. But for me, I take their school bags, and check the note from the teacher, and then I will help where I can, just because children when it comes to homework, like to be dishonest. They are lazy, and they always want to play."*

Jooma also stated that even though he was not educated and found his children's homework challenging, his children still preferred doing homework with him, more than they did with their mother:

> *"With their homework, I am 100% involved, they want me to help them with their homework, whereas somewhere somehow their homework versus my thinking and education level, is totally different. You see, so I am 100% involved with their assignment and homework, yaa."*

Fathers' active involvement in their children's education was evident in the statements above. Their determination was reflected in their continued support, despite their lower levels of education, which at times challenged their understanding of the actual homework. This level of commitment ensured that they were facilitating better academic achievement through their engagement with their children's homework. According to Patall et al. (2008), children performed better when their parents were involved with their homework.

4.3.3 Child-care. Most fathers showed an interest in child-caring activities, e.g. bathing, tucking children into bed and feeding them. However, they were selective with the types of tasks they preferred, and when they wanted to be involved. Some indicated that their participation was based on whether the mother was still busy with something else, which could imply that fathers consider child-care as being a mother's role. Mthombeni commented that:

> "*I would offer assistance in terms of, I would like ask her what she needs now, so that I can assist, so I had to fill up those gaps that she could not. I would assist her and all that."*

It was interesting to note how some fathers believed that being involved in child-care and domestic activities was about "helping" – which suggested they did not think that

these were their responsibilities. The Globalised Fatherhood book quoted the Chuo University Professor Fukuda Massaki: "until the age of 3, your [father] job is to help" and further stated "even a little bit of help shows you love your wife" (Inhorn et al., 2014, p. 65). These words suggest that fathers are "helpers" to mothers, rather than co-equal parents to their children. Similarly, the findings suggested that fathers did not regard child-care and domestic roles as belonging to them, but rather to the mother of the child – as Mnqobi reported:

> *"…ehhh so now when it comes to domestic work, and handling the child, she [wife] is more involved."*

Changing nappies and waking up for the children was at the top of the list of activities that participants did not like doing, while some commented that they were naturally not designed for it. Some even admitted not to having done it since the birth of their children. *"I never did that one [changing nappies]. No, it's not something that she asked me to do and I refused. It does not come natural to me, never! [changing nappy]"*, according to Zolani.

Zeth also commented that feeding and tucking the children into bed were his duties. However, he did not want to change nappies and had no reason to do it:

> *"…changing the nappy was a problem. I just did not want to, I don't know [why he did not want to]. Feeding them was my duty. Tucking them into bed, yes. I do that because I am strict in terms of the times of going to bed".*

These statements suggested that fathers believed that men and women have different strengths, and mothers were naturally suited to child-care and domestic activities. Their belief expressed the lack of desire to learn to become children's nurturers and child-carers just like mothers.

Contrary to the views shared by some, Mthombeni insisted on becoming fully engaged in all activities, including changing nappies:

> *"... for example, some people say that for a child to be independent, they say the child must sleep in a separate bedroom from her/his parents. I did not buy into those things, I wanted him here. I was willing to alternate or even watch him throughout the night. I was highly involved in changing nappies and making of the bottle."*

It became clear that the transitioning of a father from a traditional man to what is known as the modern father, who is not just a breadwinner, but is also involved in nurturing and child-care activities, was a challenge for many. Gershuny (2001, p. 373) refers to this challenge as a "lagged adaptation" gap between attitude and behaviour.

4.3.4 Spending time with children. Most fathers described spending time with their children in various forms, as being largely determined by children's ages. Spending time with children also had a unique interpretation for each of the participants. They reported spending time through playing with their younger children and communicating with their older children. Participants referred to spending time and cited activities such as eating out, socialising with them, watching soccer, visiting other families with children, praying with the children every morning and evening, playing with a toddler while watching a mountain from their bedroom, and taking children out for a walk.

Taking children out. Dumi reported:

> *"I'm a sport person, so let's say weekend, or even in the middle of the week, let's say I have a game, we are training – I would take him with."*

Jooma also stated: *"Ehhhh, because I made it a norm from when they were young, they enjoy going out, because normally from the age of 3, [and] always Saturdays, I would take them to Spur."*

The statements suggested that fathers were eager to spend time with their children, even when it meant that they would incorporate their hobbies (participating in their sport activities) with the time they shared with their children or taking time out to relax with them. When Queenan (1995) provided tips for contemporary fatherhood, among other things they mentioned was the importance of inviting children in things of interest to their fathers, which will encourage quality time between fathers and children.

Communication with children. All fathers were involved in communicating with their children. However, this was also based on the subject matter. Thoba reported that:

> *"Dinner times are there, they are chilled, this time usually is more about chatting. You know this thing kids do when you ask how was your day, they say fine, so I have gotten to a point of asking specifics, especially when you know your child, any of the challenges. I even tried the other day, think I got it on the internet, that you ask what the teacher was wearing at school – but kids are dynamic. They get bored with standard settings, so it must be stuff. Sometimes I go and tease – who are your friends, girlfriends etc., so that we can talk. The interesting part is the spiritual questions they come up with, at least they are strong communicators. They talk as far as when things are positive, then one needs to train them that even when things are not so well, in the negative side of the things, they should be as communicative as they are."*

Ndalo also commented that:

"When we are watching TV in the sitting room, relaxing, chatting about anything, they even know the programmes I like, and will call me when they start. I also know what they like – cartoons. We also talk about lifestyle; I know the young one likes takkies and cars."

However, they all struggled and showed signs of discomfort with conversations pertaining to the biological sex of their children. It was difficult for them to name the genitals with their proper names. Some even commented that it was not easy for them to utter such words in my presence, because I was a woman. When enquiring about communication and education on issues relating to human sexuality (including emotional relations and responsibilities, human sexual anatomy, sexual activity, sexual reproduction, age of consent, reproductive health, reproductive rights, safe sex, birth control, sexual abstinence and masturbation) with their children, Mnqobi dropped his face and closed his eyes, as if he was showing signs of resigning from the matter. He reported: *"yuuuu, andithethi ngezonto bethuna [I don't speak about those things]".* According to some African cultures, uttering sexual genitals can be seen as being taboo, and therefore in most instances this is avoided (Fandrych, 2012). This could be a challenge for most fathers, who were parenting children who attended Western cultural schools, which could be outside of what is considered the norm in other cultures.

Five participants had teenage children and it was interesting to note how shy they became when engaging in discussions on sexual matters, gender, and masturbation with their children. They reported leaving such matters with to the mother as well as teachers at school. In respondents' defense, they mentioned gender differentials as being the main barrier, where they had observed discomfort in their girl children as far as sexual conversations were concerned:

> *"I push that responsibility to mom. No, she must be responsible, because I know as soon as the child [girl] becomes a teenager, there are some things she would never express to me"*, according to Jooma.

This statement supported Hutchinson and Cederbaum (2011, p. 552) as they refer to mothers as "widely acknowledged as the primary in-home sexual educators of children", rather than fathers.

Of the five that had teenage children, one confirmed that he was comforted that sex education was covered by the syllabus in school (life orientation), and most of his fears came from the fact that he was raised in a generation where it was taboo to talk to elders about any matters relating to human sexuality. He confirmed that his main struggle was not to bombard children with information that was age inappropriate – because he never knew how to ascertain if children were ready or not.

> *"With regard to that, I will not lie, I have not started engaging, but I have heard his mom trying to talk to him about these things [sexually-related matters]. I don't feel I am ready, or they are ready [to talk about sexual matters with his 15-year-old son, and 13-year-old daughter]. Maybe I am coming from the old school, this is a taboo, I have not engaged in that, I don't know how to approach it"*, according to Mnqobi.

Ndalo added that:

> *"My struggle, I will be very honest with you, I am not into it as much as maybe I should be. My struggle at times, you don't want to introduce stuff to a child, which maybe is not even in their mind. So, the timing issue is my big thing, are they still innocent?"* Mvelo also reinforced, *"I think not now, sometimes I think I'd rather wait until they bring it up, then I would know that its ok, now he is ready to speak or to educate him".*

Cook (2012) argued that sex education was better provided by parents, however, they did not take on the role, just as the respondents in this study reported. The concern they had shared about introducing sex education to children and the level of readiness from children was indeed valid. This concern has also been raised in the article entitled "Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) in South Africa – Sexuality Education or Sex Education?", which questioned whether the Department of Basic Education should implement CSE programmes in South African public schools. The debate was around the fact that the addition of this programme in the curriculum could result in "radical sexualisation of children, which is referred to as a dangerous assault on the health and innocence of children" (Badenhorst, 2018). However, some fathers relied on discussing what they referred to as 'difficult conversations' through the Bible. For example, some participants added that matters related to human sexuality were better discussed with children during the weekly religious meetings they often attended as a family. However, they still found these dialogues challenging. Mthombeni commented that he engaged better with his toddler daughter through reading Bible stories and added: *"Every day, we read the Bible before we sleep."* Ndalo also added that:

> "*As a Jehovah's Witness, we study with them, there is a book for youth, I go to that book. Probably I will go to that book and go to those chapters because there is valuable information and insight that you can get from there."*

Jooma believed in Bible teachings when he stated, *"Ehhhh, on that one, we are church people, so as our child is growing up, they will be going to church and there will be some teachings at church."*

A relational spirituality framework based on results of peer-reviewed studies from 1999-2009 highlights significant benefits and healthy relationships between fathers and children among religious families (Mahoney, 2010). However, the findings

of this study suggest that fathers from religious families can to some extent over rely on the prescriptive views of the Bible, which is likely to limit personal and heart-to-heart engagement with their children around topics relating to human sexuality. According to Payne and Ross (2010), the lack of relational quality can negatively impact on fathers' secured attachment and their sensitive responses with their children. These are critical elements for reassuring children emotionally, leaving them feeling understood, which can lead to healthy social, emotional, cognitive, and motivational development.

4.3.5 Discipline. All respondents reported that disciplining children was critical for instilling values in them. They all practiced various methods, which included corporal punishment, teaching Christian values from the Bible, imparting cultural knowledge as well as encouraging self-love and confidence. Notably, Zeth showed concern that he travelled away from home at least three times a week for business and being away from home had negative effects on his children – i.e. there was a lack of discipline in the house. He reported that:

> "*No it definitely affects them [being away from home], I know for Xoli it does, for uXolani probably it's here and there, because of the age [still young – 4 years], but I know it also does because of sleeping late. I think also consistency with the kids is very important, including the times of going to bed, in terms of discipline around the house, and kids take chances."*

Schwalb et al. (2013) convincingly stated that the concept of a strict, authoritarian, disciplinarian, and a man who offers respect, has remained popular in most cultures across the globe.

Corporal punishment. Out of 12 participants, 83% (10/12) reported that they used corporal punishment to guide and teach their children with good values. Mndebele reported:

> *"Sometimes, I reprimand her, aybo, Dolly, stop what you are doing. Dolly, stop, stop it, stop it. I will spank you now, because when you discipline a child, you must hit her somewhere to show them it's wrong."* Ndalo added, *"If ever let's say, they do something wrong, even the little one, I would tap on the hand, and the boy even gets a spank.*"

Zolani supported by saying:

> *"Yaaaa, you discipline. If a baby does not listen, when you see a baby doing something wrong, sometimes you end up smacking her, because you will say I told you not to do this and now you are doing it."*

These responses were against many South African laws that protect children from corporal punishment, including the Abolition of Corporal Punishment Act (Act No. 33 of 1997), which was meant to prohibit the punishment in schools as well. In their article "What the law says you can and can't do" published in the *Mail & Guardian*, Ebrahim (2017, 4p) referred to corporal punishment as "any behavior that would inflict injury on a child whether it is physical or emotional is not allowed". In contrast, corporal punishment was still recommended by many as an effective disciplinary tool that was necessary for "good parenting", and used to alter immediate compliance, as long as no significant injury occurred (Zolotor, 2014).

This kind of punishment was mostly practiced in younger children. Mthombeni added that age was one factor that influenced the kind of discipline that was most appropriate for his children. He confirmed that when his son was around the ages of 16

years, he changed the disciplining style and opted to rather sit him down and gave him advice about life.

> *"And at another stage, you have to tell them, or at a later stage like when my son was coming up to about 16/17 years he was starting to behave how can I call it, hahahah, at that stage you think again that you don't have to beat him, maybe even smack him. I have to tell him, sit him down trying to advise him, or trying to share how things go in life, and tell him why I don't like you doing this and that, ehhh, and why you must do this and that, trying to show him, so it's all about the levels of the kids as they grow up. Yes it depends on the age",* Mthombeni.

Teach children respect. *Ukuhlonipha* [respect] is still considered a cultural driving force among Black Africans. Respect can be shown using physical signs, such as avoiding eye contact, particularly in the rural areas (Fandrych, 2012). Some participants indicated that as part of culture, children were not allowed to look elders in the eye, and call elders by their names. This behaviour was regarded as disrespect and reflected on fathers as being inadequate in performing their parenting duties.

> *"For instance, if the visitors are coming over, he [son] knows that it is time to go to his room, he knows his space. Yes that is how I taught them, that when we are talking with older people, they must go into their rooms, because just when we converse with elders, they will be staring them in the eye",* according to Mvelo.

Dumi indicated that:

> *"My son does not call me by name, he says uTata, so that he knows that an older person is called uTata, and all the ladies are called uMama. It is important, because I think that's where the respect starts, because basically by calling an older person by name is sign of disrespect."*

The statement by Mvelo may be detrimental in the social development of children, as eye contact is considered a non-verbal communication that influences social behaviour (Senju et al., 2003). Therefore, this poses a challenge for fathers, who are trying to teach respect to their children by avoiding eye contact. The article "Improving Your Child's Social Skills: Making Eye Contact" by *The Social Express* (2014), emphasises the importance of parents developing eye contact with their children as it strengthens the communication and focus.

Similarly, Mvelo's statement may discourage the adult-child conversations, which are important for children's development. According to Zimmerman et al. (2009), the communication between adults and children is not only effective through reading or storytelling and television, but two-sided adult-child conversations can also enhance a healthy language for children.

Therefore, it is evident that as social norms are evolving, culture remains stagnant, and there is a lack of platforms available to assist and educate fathers to adjust to the challenge of closing the gap between tradition and the 'requirements' of being a modern father.

Dress code. Furthermore, eight percent (1 out of 12) of respondents reported how children, particularly girls' dress code was associated with the type of family she grew up in, and it was the father's role to ensure that girl children are properly dressed (e.g. skirts or dresses that are not far above the knees). He added that even the Bible teaching accentuated how girls were meant to dress. However, this came from a good place, as this was intended to protect the child from being physically abused by boys out in the streets:

> *"The verse in the Bible states how people must dress, there must be a difference between a girl child that comes from a [decent] home, and the girl child that*

ehhh, I will use strong language, a child who uses her body for a living. Often people in the street take advantage when they see how a person is dressed", according to Mndebele.

In the article by Jen Marie (2015, May 14), they indicated that such views can be problematic, as they can be judgmental, body shaming, harmful and likely to encourage rape culture, as well as destroy confidence in other humans, particularly girls and women. Moreover, they added that women's dress code does not permit consent or invitation to any sexual activity. According to Stamoulis (2010, June 10), 'slut shaming' is a form of bullying that is belittling and dehumanising, which can have negative psychological effects, and often directed at girls.

Self-respect. Seventeen percent (2/12) of the respondents reported that they taught their children the importance of self-respect (and others) as well as self-love and self-confidence. They impressed these qualities through encouraging children to become who they were destined to be:

"It's more of making them to become the best version of what they can be. For me it is how they relate to other people, through action and talking on how they deal with other people, because some things could be influenced by my own preconceived ideas based on my experience. So, I must be careful in how I allow her to be herself, so what I am trying to do is not to let my barriers become hers. So, I must constantly check if I am not reducing her to becoming the best version of what she can be", according to Zeth.

In support of this view, Fagan and Kaufman (2015) considered effective parenting as that of learning and utilising new disciplinary techniques, which can cultivate child independence and allow a father to be better attuned to his children.

4.3.6 Role model. Most respondents reported that their own behaviour was important, as it served as the model for their children. Mbeje: *"my role is to be their coach, their leader."*

According to Dumi:

> *"…being an example to them in terms of how they should behave, I give them that type of respect on what to do and not to do, so that they can know that this is good and this is not good. And in terms of sharing, all the kids, what they do outside, they learn inside the house, you see."*

According to Ndalo:

> *"To play a father figure to them. To make sure that I am a good example to them [role model], they see everything right from me. I am trying to be their coach, to be a father, to be everything, a brother, everything. I play all those roles in their lifetime. Ohhhh I do play a role of a father to my children."*

According to Mvelo:

> *"… then also my role is to make sure that we are raising our kids according to our culture. You know in a family there is a way you call your son or in each family there is a certain behavior, like I try to model them in a way that which fits them well in a family."*

These statements illustrated the importance of role modeling for the majority of fathers towards their children. These phrases concur with the findings by Hébert et al. (2009), which suggested that children often referred to their fathers as the persons who had the most influence and lessons in determining who they became in life.

4.4 Conclusion

Based on these research findings, fathers are to some extent shifting from being just traditional breadwinners and evolving towards being a more involved parent. This

evidence was validated by the increased engagement, accessibility and responsibility that respondents conveyed, in line with Lamb et al. (1985) theoretical framework. The father involvement roles that were highly cited were financial provision, education, followed by child-care and spending time. Furthermore, the respondents also pointed out discipline and role modelling as being the children's primary needs.

Compared to previous generations, most respondents were engaged, accessible, and responsible, however, the extent to which they were involved varied according to their motivation and institutional practices. This included their parenting skills, which were highly informed by their educational levels and cultural values or traditional practices and beliefs. Institutional practices also contributed to how they became involved with their infants, particularly at the birth of their children – i.e. the hospital denying fathers to provide support during childbirth.

The modern father has shifted from being a traditional man, to being a more accessible and engaged man who spends time, communicates, plays, and helps his children with homework. However, cultural practices remained a challenge and prevented a smooth adaptation and transition in closing the gap between attitude and behaviour.

Indeed, the themes have indicated that fathers' residence often provided a greater platform for the father-child relationship, which we expect would essentially result in positive outcomes for children in their development.

Chapter 5: Factors constraining and supporting fatherhood

This chapter discusses the cited themes that shaped the level of co-resident fathers' involvement in their children's lives. The founded themes indicated factors such as level of education (which essentially impacts on the types of employment), culture and gender roles.

5.1 Fathers' level of education. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of fathers had completed their tertiary level education, which ranged from a national certificate, to a diploma, Bachelors degree or an Honours degree, while twenty-five percent (25%) had matric and eight percent (8%) had grade 8 as their highest attained education. Researchers have found that education level constitutes a fundamental instrument for job opportunities and a better career, which, ultimately, positively links to economic output (Mpendulo & Mang'unyi, 2018; Archer & Chetty, 2013). Generally, skilled jobs with relatively better benefits are often reserved for those with higher levels of education (Martí Linares, 2015). Therefore, unskilled labourers suffer not only higher levels of unemployment, but lower wages and fewer benefits.

Out of 12, ten participants reported that they were permanently employed and two were self-employed. However, they all reported to have an income. Regardless of fathers' level of education, all 12 respondents indicated that they were generally present in their children's development, right from pregnancy. Mvelo with an Honours level degree stated:

> *"I was very much involved with him [his unborn son], let's say, from having medical aid. Yes, financially, having medical aid, making sure that she has good gynae, in a private hospital, and all that. I also registered in programmes pertaining to pregnancy, I would make sure she [his wife] eats good food, in terms of a diet, all those things."*

When Mthombeni who has a Diploma as his highest level of education was asked to share the experience when he found out that his wife was pregnant, he responded that:

> *"It was a beautiful experience, we went to all the Dr's examinations, made sure she was comfortable, I would drive her wherever, [and] dropped everything if she needed something. Even at home I was highly supportive, I started cooking a lot, and made sure that those types of things are taken care of. Also, the anticipation around the child's arrival, like decorating the room, even the discussion about the name is another interesting one as well."*

Jooma with a low level of education (grade 8) also reflected on his experience and demonstrated his support with his unborn children. He commented:

> *"In all Dr's visits, during 9 months of pregnancy, I was off from work. Yayaya, I enjoyed going with her [his wife]…When it comes to feeding my children, both my wife and I share the tasks. When one is feeding the other, I take care of another. I am also very good with playing with them."*

These findings suggested that most co-resident fathers displayed willingness in parenting their children, despite their levels of education. Researchers state that the level of higher education is likely to influence paternal involvement and is beneficial for children's development. However, Jooma's case suggested that education alone was not a dominating factor that influenced fathers' involvement in their children's lives (Holmes et al., 2010; Madhavan et al., 2008; Harris & Morgan, 1991). While he did not reach his matric level, he still showed active involvement with his children, confirming that even with varying levels of education, fathers shared similar degrees of participation. Most fathers indicated willingness, support and presence in their fathering practices.

Sixty-seven percent (67%) of fathers were present during the birth of their children in the hospital, while the remainder (thirty-three percent - 33%) were not present. Zolani reported that:

> *"At birth I was there – of course I was happy I was there. Scary, but exciting feeling or experience. Yoooo that walk, I will never forget, the smile as I was walking down the passage. Anyone who would have come closer to that cot I would have killed them. That's how over-protective I was at that moment."*

Researchers have reported that fathers who are present at the birth of their children, are likely to participate better in children's lives, leading to stronger long-term involvement (Leonard, 1977; Hallgreen et al., 1999; Gungor & Beji, 2007).

Out of eight that indicated that their highest level of education was a post-matric qualification (i.e. certificate, diploma, Bachelors degree, Honours degree), seven were present at the birth of their children. Out of four fathers that indicated that their highest level of education was not higher than matric, only one was present at the birth of his children.

Based on the findings of this study, lower levels of education had an impact on types of employment fathers had access to, and sometimes their income levels. These analyses revealed that most fathers that were not present during the birth of their children were willing to be part of the experience of their children's birth. However, those fathers were limited by their work circumstances and the type of hospitals their partners gave birth in, citing structural limitations in the maternity wards, particularly in public hospitals. The challenges included the logistics around leave application being granted in time to travel to where the children were born and their work commitments.

5.2 Father's type of employment

5.2.1 Work commitments. Three fathers, with their level of education not higher than matric, reported that they were not present during the birth of their children. Out of the three, two stated that they could not attend due to work commitments:

> *"Regarding that time I was not with her, because I had a course that I had to attend to which was also compulsory, so I had to attend that course, and after that, I think it was a half day course, then I went that side"*, according to Dumi.

5.2.2 Leave grants. Mndebele indicated that his wife had gone back home to be closer to her own mother (maternal grandmother of the child) in the Eastern Cape around the birth of the child. He therefore could not leave Cape Town for the Eastern Cape immediately after receiving the news of the birth of his child. He had to request and be granted leave from his workplace, before making travelling arrangements to go to uMtata (Eastern Cape) – where both the mother and child were. He only got to the Eastern Cape two days after the child was born, and mother and child had already been discharged:

> *"I could not go to the hospital for the labour of my daughter, because I had to arrange leave in advance, because this is usually a sudden process, you receive a call to say, she is in labour pains, then you have to book. Then you cannot even find means to travel. I only got to the Eastern Cape two days after, and my wife was already home [maternal home]".*

Both these statements reflect how employment conditions determined father's responses and their immediate attendance of their children's birth. This is in line with Burnett et al.'s (2010) view which expresses employers' high expectations of 'presenteeism' among working fathers. Furthermore, Lewis (2000, p. 4) pointed out that most men in Britain worked longer hours – 48 hours per week for fathers with

children under the age 11, with more than a quarter of 33-year-old fathers working more than 60 hours, and two-thirds worked at the evenings and weekends, and some had night work. The policies had a negative impact on father's involvement in child-care activities. It is probable that different levels of employment offered different benefits, and those at the lower employment level had less opportunity to negotiate things like leave and sometimes there may have been fear of losing their jobs.

5.2.3 Self-employment. Similarly, one father who reported to be self-employed as a carpenter, stated that he provided support by only transporting his partner when she needed it during pregnancy. Some of these places, such as prenatal visits with a medical professional, and purchase of nursery essentials, required both parents to be present. However, his type of job and work demands limited him to have time to become part of the actual experience:

> *"… so, all I had to do, like, I drop her at the clinic, she goes in and I go to work. Normally I have never been there at that time when she is inside. I always drop her, maybe because of the nature of my work, I always respect my work."* according to Tapiwa.

Every job was about survival and could be the last opportunity to secure his ability to provide as much as he could for his children. Indeed, at times it was not about fathers failing to contribute towards their children's lives, but the type of job they had ended up taking because of not having the luxury to negotiate with their clients. In support of this statement, Burnett et al. (2010) emphasised how men's jobs "get in the way of them achieving their willingness to be more involved" with children.

To sum up, Harris and Morgan (1991) speak of how the level of education can impact on the type of job and essentially the income level. This potentially allowed some fathers to have more resources that were likely to influence their level of paternal

involvement. Moreover, low levels of income can limit the available choices of better medical care, and the practices in some institutions.

5.2.4 Institutional practices. The system in the public hospital became a gatekeeper that prevented fathers having positive experiences and improved involvement when children were still in hospital soon after the birth. Tapiwa reported that he had never been present at the birth of his children because of the infrastructural challenges in the public hospitals. Although he mentioned that he always wanted to be part of the experience, his understanding was that the arrangement in the public hospital, where several mothers share the same maternity ward, was that they did not allow the presence of a male while other women were also giving birth:

> *"… at birth I normally take her to the hospital, but I have never been in the labour with her when she is having a baby. Aahhh, maybe, I can't say why, maybe, sometimes with labourers, they do not allow men there, even here [South Africa]. I remember when I go there and they said ok she is in labour, I must wait. When I went to Langa [township in Cape Town], they kicked me outside when she was in labour, jaaa. They said I must stand outside - we will call you. Even in Zim, like I have never been in labour with her, I go with her, and then they took her inside, and then said OK, we will call you."*

The Department of Health's: Health Promotion Unit in the Western Cape Government developed a maternity booklet entitled "Caring for mothers, caring for you". This booklet was meant to provide the information, suggestion and support for mothers and their carers. The inclusion and role of a father during child birth is clearly defined on page 10, "A birth companion can be; the mother's partner; the father of the baby; a family member; a friend – a person who is available to help the mother to prepare for the baby's birth and is with the mother during labour". However, Tapiwa's statement

suggested that some men's experiences challenged what the Department claims to enforce, as it was contradictory to what the hospitals were practicing. This also meant that a father relied on his own speculations, without the support and clarity from health professionals that explained why he could not be in the ward, which could have left him feeling helpless. According to Huusko et al. (2018), fathers often feel excluded in any birth-related discussions, such as parental education, child-care at birth, examinations – as this information is usually directed at mothers. This lack of information from health professionals could be an indication that the traditional gender stereotypes put emphasis on the role of a father as an unequal part in children's lives (Dowd, 1996). This further suggests that fathers are not expected to be nurturers, and associates nurturing with mothers only. Furthermore, the system in this particular public hospital was in contrast with Draper's (2003) argument that childbirth is a process that belongs to and is equally critical for both parents.

5.2.5 Work-life balance. It emerged that some fathers had developed strategies on how to manage work-life balance. Zeth commented that:

> *"Do the things that you have to do as a dad, spend time… because we are chasing a career, there's [a] certain frustration that you bring home and that actually impacts on the time you spend with your wife and the kids. You just have to separate that, when you are home, you are home – put the phone away, just spend time."*

This reflection demonstrated a slight shift from how men were socially and culturally raised to value only their work, achievement and success over their families, to what modern men have adopted as the work-life balance phenomenon (Evans et al., 2013). The response from the father was aligned with Greenhaus et al.'s (2003) model, which

defined work-life balance as that which included time balance, involvement balance and satisfaction balance.

In some instances, cultural practices remained a challenge and prevented a smooth adaptation and transition in closing a gap between fathers' attitudes and behaviours. These cultural challenges are presented in the next section.

5.3 Culture and gender roles. The component of culture and gender role differences came across as a huge barrier among most respondents. One respondent admitted facing difficulties in challenging the cultural status quo. While he recognised the need to offer child-care, the fear of being badly spoken about by other men and extended family members was unimaginable for him:

> *"… and maybe that is how it became like a cultural issue of saying these are duties of a man, these are duties of a wife, so we still like surviving in that way, we are trying to change it. But it's not like it as easy as we think that we can change it, because if anybody see me doing it, then I will get spoken at all over."*, according to Zolani.

In some Black African communities where the father was engaged in child-care and domestic activities, the extended paternal family would suspect that they have been tamed or bewitched by their partners:

> *"In my culture, it is not part of the man's [role] to change the nappies or to wash the nappies, but you know in culture if you do it they say ehhhh your wife has, mhhhhh, you wife has tamed you or she [wife] has given you "something" that you are willing to do anything…they say sometimes a wife can go to a sangoma [witch], get some muti, and if you eat that muti [sorcery], then some of the men, don't want to go to work, must do anything, like they sit at home and do everything the wife need to do. It will end up affecting the relationship with*

the family, it will end up affecting your wife's relationship with the whole family, and maybe ehhhh when it come like that, you know family always cause divorce, like to cause divorce, when divorce was not necessary. Now they will go along gossiping about you, or gossiping about her, so sometimes these cultures we have to follow them so that we get on well with everybody in the family", according to Mnqobi.

These findings suggested that modern fathers continued to experience challenges of becoming involved and nurturing men in the present day, while trying to maintain extended family relationships. This concept still prevented fathers from stepping into their rightful role of active parenting. While Thoba believed that traditionally, child-care activities were mothers' roles and not fathers' roles, he could engage in such tasks when he is 'helping' the mother of the child:

"Feeding, it's my wife [role]. I help out in those things, but it's mostly her. I suppose it's traditional, it's traditionally entrenched these things. The changing nappy part is difficult, changing diapers. I know that I have to do it, but it is really one thing that I do not want to do. The discomfort around that, I am quiet sensitive to smell".

Mndebele also added that:

"In terms of changing nappies, I don't like to lie, I have never changed the nappies, I never changed the nappies, like if the child mess you, then I like always call my wife and say this child has messed up, hahahahaha, and then she comes and takes the baby and washes him."

These statements reinforced the narrative of traditional gender role differentials that continued to hold back fathers from participating in the nurturing activities that are considered to be for mothers. So cemented was this narrative that the fathers themselves

have this strong belief and rights to do what Featherstone (2009, p. 33) describes as "cherry picking". Cherry picking means that fathers believe they can select the types of roles they get involved in, and in most cases they choose the activities such as playing and having fun with children, more than actual child-care (Gatrell, 2007).

5.3.1 Mothers spending the first few months after birth with the maternal family. Most fathers indicated that they spent time with their children; however, twenty-five percent experienced the first few months (3-4 months) with their infants. Figure 6 below illustrates the number of fathers that never had the opportunity to spend time with their infants soon after birth.

This was because their partners (mother of the child), soon after giving birth, went back home to spend the maternity break with their own mothers (maternal grandmother of the child). When fathers were asked how this experience was for them, most explained it as necessary for the development of a child, because the maternal grandmother or an elder aunt in the family were more experienced in caring for the children and needed to impart the knowledge to her own. Ndalo reported that:

> *"She was going to leave for 4 months, wooow I did not, to be honest with you, initially I did not want her to go. Rather she must stay in Cape Town, but I realised as well that she needed the support of her mother."*

Ndalo also mentioned that:

> *"She [my wife] went home and stayed with her mother [maternal mother], because she had no experience in caring for a new-born, because there is no nurse around, there must be at least, someone who will support her. So, she went and stayed in Gugulethu [her home of origin], so it was fine for me because I was working. We can say it's a tradition, she must go, yaaaa"*

There is limited literature that informs this common practice around Africans and mothers spending the first few months with their infant children with their maternal family. During this period, maternal grandmothers or any other female elder within the maternal family assume the caring role and provide support for both the mother and her infant child. Similarly, the findings from what fathers reported, suggested that they trusted elderly women in the family to have more wisdom around raising children.

In response to how it made him feel when the mother of the child spent time with her own mother soon after the birth of the children, Thoba responded and also emphasised the value this practice had for the mother and essentially the child:

> *"I know well that as a baby girl, all baby girls [refers to women], there is a time when they need to go to their own mothers to learn something they were never taught before. So now, when the mother goes home, she goes there as a different character [a mom, not as a girl], because she has a new-born. It is now her mom's responsibility to teach her what she has never taught her before, because it her [new mother] new experience in history, so it's grand-mothers [maternal grand-mother] to get 100% involved to teach her daughter to do this and that [to handle the infant]."*

Some considered this practice as a way to prevent the mother and father from getting sexually involved in order to avoid the incident of falling pregnant while the mother is still breastfeeding. In other words, this was meant to serve as a contraceptive tool for the couple. Some commented that during the early days when the mother of a child experiences post-partum bleeding, it was a bad omen for a male figure to be in contact with a female in such a condition:

> *"In the olden days, our mothers would be staying in a different hut, with an elderly woman, in most cases it would be the maternal mom. Fathers stay in a*

different hut within the same homestead. I am not sure if it fine to say this, but I also heard that when the woman is having her periods, which happens a lot after giving birth, the father is not allowed to be in contact with the blood … the blood weakens the man. They say it is not clean, linamashwa [bad omen], but this is what I heard." according to Mthombeni.

This notion reinforced the fathers' lack of contact following the birth of their children, without recognising some of the negative effects it may have on the father–child bond.

5.4 Father's family of origin.

Seventy five percent - 75% (9/12) of respondents grew up in the absence of their own fathers and were cared for by their mothers and relied on the extended families to play the father figure role in their upbringing. The reasons cited for the absence of their own fathers, included migrant labour, death and father not known from birth. All nine fathers that reported growing up without the presence of their own biological fathers, indicated that they were not negatively affected by their own father's absence, because their families (e.g. uncles, step-fathers and grandparents) filled the role.

The idea of a child growing up under the care of a village is a common traditional practice among Black Africans. Makusha and Richter (2014) substantiate this view when they consider a father in the South African context as being the man who is not necessarily linked to a child because he is genetically involved in the make-up of an offspring – but extends to social relationships, such as uncles, grandparents, and step-fathers. They emphasise that "when biological fathers are unable to meet the needs of children, a social father (e.g. grandfathers, brothers, or maternal uncles and step-fathers) is likely to come in and play a paternal role in children's lives."

Moreover, the customary law and Children's Act of South Africa support the notion of children belonging to the extended family members, especially the paternal

family, and also to the community for the welfare and decisions pertaining to the child (Songca, 2011).

In addition, Berger et al. (2008) concluded that the high rate of divorce has also led to children growing up with social fathers in the United States. However, the findings of their study suggested that co-resident social fathers had an equal to a higher quality parenting practice and cooperated better than biological fathers. Similarly, Zeth reported that:

> *"So, if you were to ask me about a father figure in my life, ehhh my stepdad was a father figure, but my grand-father was probably more of a close blood line ehhh father to me. I don't know whether what I'm saying make sense … I think for me, there was more than one father figure in my life, and they played different roles, so yes, my grandfather, yes, my stepfather, but I also had my uncles. They all played different roles, so my uncles would mainly be social, if I want to ask advice, or whatever, they were the easiest to talk to, because some of them were young – it is easy to ask about girlfriend stuff and whatever."*

When Ndalo was asked whether he did not feel the void of his absent biological father, he responded:

> *"… not that much, because my uncles, four of them were staying with us, and were all working. Anyway, I did not know my father, so the people that were in my life were my mother, and her siblings – my aunts and uncles, then her mom, which is my grand-mother."*

However, it emerged that the absence of some men's own fathers shaped the extent to which they were involved with their own children – when they acknowledged how they now consciously strived to do better and became more engaged with their own children. Mvelo who grew up without his biological father stated that:

"It is precisely what I did not want to do [not to share a home with his own children]. It's how life dealt with me, as I said, I am over that, but I probably made a vow to myself that my kids will not go through the same thing [grow with extended family, while he was alive]."

He further added that it was important that he created his own template that he never had as a young growing boy – on how to parent his own children: *"I wanted to have that feeling, giving them that love that I could not receive and giving them the love that they [own children] need."*

Ndalo, also reported that:

"I find fatherhood quiet interesting … mhhhh to know that she [daughter] is looking forward to seeing me, and she is happy to see me, ja, she is starting to feel that I am her father, always expecting me to give her something, so as a provider it makes me happy. I am trying to articulate my feelings, jaaaa I am actually happy that she [daughter] expects me to do those things for her… to provide for her… yes correct [provision taking a higher priority in the involvement]. Because maybe, jaaaa, despite the fact that my grandfather was around, and felt like my father should have played that role somewhere, so when I am playing this role to my kid, it makes me feel happy. I am not sure if I am making sense."

Although Mthombeni grew up with a present biological father, he still consciously chose a different parenting practice from that of his own father. He reported that his own biological father was present. However, his definition of a constructive father-child relationship was that of a man that provides for children, and who commanded respect in return, while love and nurturing were considered to be the mother's role:

"I was highly involved in changing nappies and making up the bottle. Look my outlook to life especially with my experience with my dad as I have told you, I wanted to do the opposite from him, even though inside you feel this traditional man is pulling you, even though you feel you are tired, you are a human being, even though you think the wife is better equipped for it. But you force your way back into it, conscious about it, and so what I would do in this process, I wanted to be involved, but I am not sure if it was the right approach. I did not want to be named among them, you know, non-supportive absent fathers type thing, because I am aware of this concept – so I wanted to do the direct opposite out love for my children."

These statements suggest that some fathers can consciously parent their children in contrast to how they experienced their own childhood from their own fathers. In support, Kerr et al. (2009, p. 1258) argue that the inter-generational transmission of the constructive parenting model emphasises the link between "socialisation in the family of origin and [the] individual's own parenting practices".

The remaining 25% of fathers who grew up with their own fathers in the household, indicated culture, respect and love as the elements that they adopted from their own fathers. These elements also influenced how they parent their own children.

5.5 Conclusion

The analyses of this study revealed that fathers are willing to participate in their children's lives, however culture, social norms and socio-economic status shaped their parenting practices. Culture has also informed some social stereotypes, which ultimately informed father's values and beliefs. This included gender role differentials which have constrained women and defined mothers as nurturers while limiting fathers to being breadwinners. This came across as a huge barrier and resulted in fathers

limiting their involvement in child-care activities. Furthermore, fathers often chose the activities they were involved in, and these roles mostly included having fun and playing with children, more than actual child-care. In addition, father's involvement was about helping the mother of the child and did not consider child-care activities as their primary roles.

Some of the traditional practices potentially exacerbated the absence of fathers soon after the birth of their children. For example, the tradition that encouraged mothers to spend the first few months with their own mothers or elders at their maternal home. Fathers themselves showed support of this traditional practice, because it was believed that elder women carry more wisdom and are much more experienced in caring for the mother and the infant. Some defined this practice as a way to prevent a couple from getting sexually involved to avoid another pregnancy. For some fathers, being in contact with a woman soon after childbirth while she was still experiencing post-partum bleeding was seen as a bad omen for men.

Although most fathers with higher level of education reported to have been present during labour of their children compared to fathers with lower level of education, the results of this study showed no significant difference in the father's level of involvement. The absence during labour of children for most fathers was due to work commitments and the inability to obtain leave from the employers. This suggested the link between lower levels of education and employment type, which could have resulted in fewer opportunities for fathers to negotiate certain benefits at work, and sometimes out of fear of losing their jobs. Notably, was the system in some of the public hospitals, with old infrastructure not suitable for a man to be present in a shared maternity ward.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions and experiences of co-resident Black men on fathering. The vast amount of research studies has focused on absent and non-resident fathers. This has resulted in much information somehow paying attention to pathologising fatherhood, particularly among Black Africans. Therefore, this study aimed to explore co-resident fathers' roles and experiences in attempting to understand their parenting practices.

This qualitative study was conducted through personal interviews with Black fathers sharing residence with their partners (married or cohabiting) and their young children between the ages of 0 to 17 years old. The data from the interviews were collected and analysed to identify emerging themes. Three themes were identified, and focused on: Firstly, the presence of co-resident fathers in their children's lives. Secondly, the factors that shape co-resident fathers' parenting practices. Lastly, the ways in which fathers gets involved in their children's lives, as well as their understanding of their children's primary needs.

This chapter summarises the findings and relates them to Lamb et al.'s (1985) involved fatherhood theory. It then outlines the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

The significant themes from the analysis revealed that co-resident fathers are present and willing to be part of their children's lives. Fathers considered financial provision as being their vital role, from conception throughout the developmental phases of their children. This included overall maintenance, such as support for the unborn child (medical provision for prenatal assessment, buying prenatal nursery necessities) and educational expenses. It emerged that most participants were engaged in various activities with their children, which involved child care (bathing, tucking

children into bed, feeding, and changing nappies), spending time such as taking the children out, communicating with children, reading books, and helping them with their homework.

However, fathers engaged in these roles at different levels. Most participants cited changing nappies as one of the roles they struggled with and did not like engaging with. While they communicated with their children, they also found it difficult to engage with sexually related matters, and often left these types of conversations to teachers and mothers. Some confirmed that they relied on bringing extracts from spiritual books, to help them engage with human sexual-orientation matters. Fathers perceived respect as being an important element for children's development. Most believed in instilling respect by disciplining their children through the use of corporal punishment. They reported that they used corporal punishment mostly for younger children and speaking to their older ones. A minority of fathers encouraged their younger children to understand the values of self-respect, self-love and confidence. Role modeling was emphasised by most participants as a fundamental component they sought to display to their children.

While the analyses of this study revealed the presence of fathers in children's lives, their parenting practices were hugely affected by several factors, which included their historical social norms, socio-economic status, and cultural experiences. The most significant theme that was found to be largely influential among co-resident fathers' parenting practices, was culture and education levels.

Given that culture is an important element in humans that embodies the values and the identity of being, gender stereotypes are also part of the culture that have had a great impact on fathers' parenting practices (Albertyn, 2009; Idang, 2015). The literature review has outlined how gender role differences have constrained women and

defined them to become nurturers while limiting fathers to breadwinners. This came across as a huge barrier and resulted in fathers limiting their involvement in child-care activities, which was similar to the findings of this study. For example, there is the tradition that is commonly practiced among Black Africans, where the mothers spend the first few months with their own mothers or elders at their maternal home. This is practiced based on the belief that elder women carry more wisdom and are much more experienced in caring for the mother and the infant.

Some defined the above practice as a way to prevent a couple from getting sexually involved to avoid another pregnancy. In other words, this served as a contraceptive measure. Of interest was the idea that a man cannot be in contact with a female who is still going through post-partum bleeding, a common experience among women soon after childbirth, as this was seen as a bad omen. This potentially exacerbated the absence of fathers soon after the birth of their children.

The levels of education did not appear to make a significant difference in the father's level of involvement with their children. However, most fathers with a higher level of education reported to have been present during birth of their children. Only one participant with lower level of education managed to be part of the child-birth experience. The absence during labour among other men was due to work commitments and the inability to obtain leave. This suggested the link between lower levels of education and employment type, which could have resulted in fewer opportunities for fathers to negotiate certain benefits at work, and sometimes out of fear of losing their jobs. This is evidence of how employment conditions have limited fathers' responses to the immediate attendance of their children, and how employers have placed high expectations of presenteeism among working fathers and policies around paid employment.

Another notable challenge was the system in the public hospitals, where the old infrastructure was not suitable for a man to be present in the shared maternity ward.

The presence of a co-resident father in the household can have little meaning if it lacks the quality of involvement, and ultimately becoming more attuned with children. Social changes have resulted in emerging paternal roles from the mid-1970s, where fathers were not only regarded as mere financial providers and protectors but were also now expected to become expressive and nurturing. These roles were highly considered to be for mothers (Finley & Shwartz, 2004). This study aimed to use Lamb et al.'s (1985) theoretical framework to make sense of the data in this study. The objective was to help researchers and communities to understand fathering practices in the household, which will allow them to support fathers and help them to better engage with and be attuned to the needs of their children.

This study used Lamb et al.'s (1985) framework of involved fathering model that conceptualises all dimensions of an involved father, comprising a man who is a provider, protector, nurturer, and who is expressive. This model also aims to understand the frequency, depth and the quality of fathers' involvement in their parenting practice. Some South African studies have adopted Lamb et al.'s (1985) involved fathering model in exploring the fatherhood (Hosegood & Madhavan, 2012; Mavungu, 2013; Eddy et al., 2013). This model defines father involvement using three dimensions. Firstly, accessibility, which represents the frequency of contact with the child, i.e. the father's presence and availability. Secondly, engagement, which denotes shared activities, i.e. having meals together, visiting relatives together, and interaction with the child – e.g. care giving, and playing. Finally, there is responsibility, which refers to decision-making, daily planning, father's participation in the child's overall needs, financial support – e.g. health-care, schooling, food, and clothing – and intimate

personal care (Smith, 2008; Hohmann-Marriot, 2011; Hosegood & Madhavan, 2012; Perry et al., 2012).

In analysing the data for this study, it was apparent that most fathers were accessible and considered responsibility as being a critical element for their children's development. While they were engaged in their children's lives, they still regarded nurturing roles to be for mothers, as they considered themselves to be 'helping' and were selective when they extended their hand to 'help'. It is, however, worth noting that co-resident fathers' involvement was hugely affected by other factors. These factors included culture, and the level of education, which essentially affected the employment and the types of benefit available to them – e.g. family responsibility leave.

Many fathers in this study were willing to participate to meet what Lamb et al.'s (1985) involved fathering theory frames as being an involved father. However, they were constrained by culture, and got worried about their identity. This does not mean that the framework is not applicable to African cultures, but it should guide how we make sense of parenting practices among Black Africans and not dictate how fathers should behave in South Africa. In instances where some fathers confirmed their participation in nurturing roles, it became clear that their engagement did not come naturally, they continuously had to fight the 'traditional man' in them. Albertyn (2009, p. 174) argues that the notion of a bounded and static culture prevents change and is "portrayed as a closed and separate space that should be free from external influence … it is fluid, diverse and subject to change".

6.1 Strength and limitations of the research study

The limitations of the study refer to the characteristics of the research design and methodological strategies that are likely to influence the interpretations of the research (Price & Murnan, 2004). According to Marshall (1996), a qualitative study uses a small

sample size. This was also the case with this particular study, where the findings were based on 12 participants. A small sample size could potentially lead to the over-generalisation of the findings, as well as impacting on the variation in responses. The findings of this study should be considered with caution and awareness when used to understand other populations, to avoid overgeneralisation (Marshall, 1996; Atieno, 2009). However, Marshal (1996) argues that the understanding of complex human issues is much more important than the generalisability of results.

Furthermore, there are challenges when the researcher conducts a qualitative study in their area of work or in an environment where they are already known (Orb et al., 2001). This was the case with the recruitment of participants in this study. Most respondents were selected in the Department where I work. The impact this could potentially have, would be to get less information from the respondents, having participants feeling pressured to take part in the study, and, most importantly, the likelihood of providing socially desirable responses.

6.2 Recommendations

This section discusses the existing policies and provides recommendations and possible interventions focused on fatherhood.

6.2.1 Infrastructure. One participant reported to have never been in the labour ward during birth of any of his children, because the midwives always requested that he wait outside during birth. This suggests that the old infrastructure in the public hospitals is not in a conducive condition to allow for privacy for other women who are also in labour. Therefore, the government should work together with the Department of Health to ensure that the infrastructural facilities are reconstructed to improve the maternity wards so allowing for more privacy, in order to accommodate men during the birth of their children.

Although, none of the participants raised concerns around the unavailability of the changing nappy tables in men's public toilet, this is another infrastructural challenge that government should ensure they improve on, in order to support men to be actively involved in child-care activities.

6.2.2 Institutional practice. The Western Cape Government: Department of Health implemented the person-centred maternity care code of practice on 7 October 2013. In the maternity care code of practice is the information booklet, which intends to provide health education material for staff, pregnant woman, and companions that support a mother during labour – e.g. fathers, family, and friends. The approved circular gets distributed to the hospitals by the Department of Health, through the hospital manager, who would then send it to the appropriate units in the hospital concerned. However, nobody investigates whether this information reaches the designated group, i.e. pregnant mothers, or even the mother's partner. Most importantly, there are no structured distribution channels to make the circular and information booklet available to companions accompanying the mother during labour, particularly fathers. It is recommended that the Department of Health finds other channels of distribution to ensure that the circulars are reached by the public. This may require the Department to partner with other organisations in the community, such as NGO's (working mostly with families), Department of social development (the department that seeks to manage and overlook over social security and assistance), general spaces in the communities (e.g. public toilets, shopping centres and local clinics).

Support and encouragement can be extended, firstly, through adding different strategies that create awareness of the significance of the fathers' role in children's holistic development. Secondly, there should be recommending key interventions for policymakers, organisations and professional caregivers, such as midwives and medical

practitioners. These interventions will allow for more considerate and sympathetic improvements towards fathers' involvement with their children, which will also be beneficial to the country.

The Department of Health should work together with the other non-government organisations that offer support to men and families, the media, TV programmes, and other distribution channels to ensure that the education material about care and support during the birth of children influences, promotes and encourages support for mothers, and is more inclusive of men. Alternatively, the booklet can be circulated through the clinics, because often mothers that deliver babies at public hospitals go to clinics for their medical prenatal assessments. Moreover, such information should not only be limited to the public service but can also be extended to private hospitals.

6.2.3 Discipline. There has been debate among South African citizens around the Constitutional Court ruling against corporal punishment in homes. However, most fathers (parents) still believe it is "my house, my rules". Some parents are still not in favor of this ruling.

Participants referred to corporal punishment as one form of punishment they believed worked for their own upbringing, as it made them turn out to be the good people, they believe they are today. However, implementing the policy that takes away the rights for parents to use corporal punishment, without replacing it with a more peaceful and effective disciplinary technique for both children and parents, could be a wasted exercise.

The IOL (2018, November 29) emphasised that the intention of this ruling was not to charge parents but to guide and support them in finding more positive and effective ways of disciplining children. However, Eye Witness News (September 19, 2019) article by Modise, reported that the Department of Social Development indicated

that it was now up to parents to find alternatives ways to discipline children. This statement is problematic, as it suggests that the same communities that are found implementing abusive disciplinary methods, are left to decide on alternative techniques, without any tools, education, and support.

One possible way to educate fathers could be to include educational programmes within organisations, such as work premises, NGOs and any other organisations that are meant to help fathers develop their parenting practices.

6.3 Future Research

Fathers in this study revealed their willingness to actively participate in their children's lives. On the other hand, mothers are highly occupying the workforce, and fathers are now not only expected to become breadwinners, but to actively contribute toward nurturing roles in the household. The concept of a modern father, who is active and nurturing, continues to be a challenge in the world where the economy and social norms (patriarchy and gender stereotypes) are evolving. This study provided another element that could further be explored on how fathers' active involvement can be practiced in a balanced manner within the cultural context among Black Africans. Furthermore, it is critical to understand the ways that can assist fathers to adapt to social and economic changes, while maintaining culture.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethics clearance

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

Department of Psychology

University of Cape Town Rondebosch 7701 South Africa
Telephone (021) 650 3417
Fax No. (021) 650 4104

15 April 2019

Sizakele Mazibuko
Department of Psychology
University of Cape Town
Rondebosch 7701

Dear Sizakele

I am pleased to inform you that ethical clearance has been given by an Ethics Review Committee of the Faculty of Humanities for your study, *Perceptions of fathering among black men who share residence with their children.* The reference number is PSY2019-010.

I wish you all the best for your study.

Yours sincerely

University of Cape Town
PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT
Upper Campus
Rondebosch

Lauren Wild (PhD)
Associate Professor
Chair: Ethics Review Committee

Appendix B: Advertisement

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

Department of Psychology
University of Cape Town Rondebosch 7701 South Africa
Phone: +27-21-650-3417

16 October 2020

The Research on perceptions and experiences of fathering among men who share residence with their children

You are invited to take part in a research study about the perceptions and experiences of fathering among resident men in parenting their children (0 – 17 years) within Cape Town. Should you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

1. A one-on-one tape-recorded interview about your perceptions (how you understand and interpret your role) and experience as a father in parenting your child(ren) from the ages 0 – 17 years.
2. The interview will take no longer than 60 minutes.
3. This research will give an opportunity to share how you understand, experience and interpret the role you play in parenting your children.
4. To be eligible for participation, the following inclusion criteria must be met:
    - A resident father (physically present father living with a partner and children in one household);
    - A Black African father who lives in Cape Town;

- Has children and been living with them from when they were ages 0 – 17 years.

For any questions, concerns or complains about the study, please contact:

Researcher:

Siza Mazibuko email at mzbsiz002@myuct.ac.za/

siza.mazibuko@gmail.com

OR

Supervisor:

Mandisa Malinga email at Mandisa.Malinga@uct.ac.za

OR

Postgraduate Administrator:

Rosalind Adams on (021) 650 3417 or email at

Rosalind.Adams @uct.ac.za

Appendix C: Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

Department of Psychology
University of Cape Town Rondebosch 7701 South Africa
Phone: +27-21-650-3417

16 October 2020

TITLE OF THE STUDY

The perceptions and experiences of fathering among men who share residence with their children

RESEARCHER

Siza Mazibuko

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

You are invited to take part in the research study within Cape Town. The purpose of the study is to understand how resident fathers perceive and experience their role in raising their children from the ages 0 – 17 years.

STUDY PROCEDURE

1. The interviews will take place in spaces convenient to you.
2. The interview is scheduled for an hour.
3. The informed consent will be explained to you before the start of the interview, including the confidentiality and the purpose of the interview.
4. The interview will be audio recorded.

RISKS

1. There is no foreseeable physical or psychological risk that may harm you during this study.
2. In the event that you experience distress when you share your story, and require emotional support after the study, I will provide Counselling Lifeline, Western Cape contact details, an NGO that offers confidential and anonymous lay-counselling services, primarily through telephone at no consultation cost.

BENEFITS

You are given an opportunity to share your views and perceptions. There is no direct benefit to you, but your contribution may add value in the broader social context in the long run, through adding on to different strategies that create awareness of the significance of a fathers' role in children's development.

CONFIDENTIALITY

1. The tape-recorded interview will be conducted in a private room to ensure confidentiality. This will be the space convenient and comfortable to you.
2. Your real name will not be used in any of the report, to ensure confidentiality.
3. The researcher and the assistant researchers will take strict precautions to safe guard your personal information throughout the study.
4. Your information will be kept on a password-protected device, in a locked file cabinet with a dummy name and other personal information.
5. Once the study is complete, your tape-recorded information will be stored until the study is completed, and thereafter it will be destroyed.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions, need more clarity or you experience discomfort as a result of participating in this study, you are free to contact:

Researcher:

Sizakele Mazibuko email at siza.mazibuko@gmail.com or mzbsiz002@myuct.ac.za.

Supervisor:

Dr. Mandisa Malinga at Mandisa.Malinga@uct.ac.za.

For any questions regarding your rights as a participant, or if any problems arise which you do not feel comfortable to discuss with the Researcher or Researcher's Supervisor, please contact:

Postgraduate Administrator:

Rosalind Adams on (021) 650 3417 or email at

Rosalind.Adams @uct.ac.za.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

1. Your participation in this study is voluntary, which means that it is up to you to take part in this study.
2. After you sign the consent form, you are still free to withdraw any time without giving a reason.
3. Withdrawing from this study will not affect the relationship you have, (if any) with the researcher or the organization you are currently part of.
4. If you withdraw before data collection is completed, your information will be destroyed.

SIGNATURES

I, _____ (name of participant) have read and understood the provided information, and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I therefore hereby agree to take part in the research by accepting the interview on how I perceive and interpret the role of fatherhood in raising my children. I understand that I can stop the interview at any point, should I not want to continue. I also understand that the information I reveal will be treated confidentially and that my personal information will not be mentioned in any research report.

Participant's signature:

Date:_____

Researcher's signature:

_____Date_____

PERMISSION TO TAPE-RECORD THE INTERVIEW

I, _____ (name of participant) understand that the interview will be tape recorded. My real name will not be used in any of the report. The researcher and the research assistants will take strict precautions to safe guard my personal information

through the study. I hereby give permission to be tape recorded for the purpose of the research.

Participant's signature:

_____

Date:_____

Researcher's signature:

_____Date: _____

Appendix D: Interview guide

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

Department of Psychology

University of Cape Town Rondebosch 7701 South Africa
Phone: +27-21-650-3417

16 October 2020

STRUCTURED QUESTIONS

Biographical information Questionnaire

First Names (Optional):	
Age:	
Country and place of Birth:	
Physical Address (optional):	
Highest level of education:	
Occupation:	
Marital Status:	
Number of children:	
Number of people in the household:	
Ages of children:	

UNSTRUCTURED QUESTIONS

1. Did you grow and stayed with your father?

2. Did you attend prenatal classes? How was your experience?
3. Can you tell me about your parental involvement pre-, at birth and post birth of your child?
    a. Were you involved?
    b. What are the things that you did or participated in?
4. How involved were you in daily care activities of the child, e.g. bathing, changing of the nappies, etc.?
5. Please tell me more about your daily activities with your child/ren? (e.g. spending time, watching them play, playing with them, reading them bedtime stories, putting them to sleep)
6. What do they enjoy the most, and least? (e.g. from their favorite dishes, to the activities –indoor/outdoor)
7. What do you think is their primary need?
8. Tell me more about your role in parenting?
9. What kind of support do you provide for your children?